FRED REINFELD CHESS CLASSICS Peter Kurzdorfer, General Editor

THE COMPLETE CHESS COURSE

Fred Reinfeld

21st Century Edition

The Complete Chess Course

From Beginning
To
Winning Chess!

by

Fred Reinfeld

21st Century Edition

Fred Reinfeld Chess Classics
Peter Kurzdorfer, General Editor

2016
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The Complete Chess Course From Beginning to Winning Chess!

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Editorial Notes

From the Editor

Mid-20th century best-selling author Fred Reinfeld introduced thousands of players to the wonderful game of chess through his tireless efforts. His books were ubiquitous and covered every conceivable aspect of the royal game.

I was one of countless chess players representing several generations who grew up surrounded by Reinfeld books. We couldn't get enough of them! He not only taught us how to play the game well, but also implanted in us his enthusiastic passion for learning the game.

Fred's books are peppered throughout with words and phrases in italics to emphasize ideas. Moves are punctuated with single, double, and even triple exclamation marks and question marks to span the entire spectrum of emotions the moves conjure up.

He had a way of reducing the most intricate, complicated combinations to their basic components. After Reinfeld explains a combination, it makes sense.

Thus I am pleased and honored to be a part of bringing back my old mentor to new generations of chess players. Russell Enterprises Inc. is engaged in a project of resurrecting the immortal Reinfeld classics, republishing them with the modern algebraic notation in place of the archaic English descriptive notation that was popular years ago to make them accessible to 21st century chess players.

This undertaking, begun under General Editor Bruce Alberston, has been passed on to me. So I get to reread these wonderful old books, change the notation in ChessBase, type up Fred's snappy prose, and look out for potential errors.

The few analytical errors that crop up from time to time are easily checked with the monster chess engine Fritz, which Fred never had access to. In those far-off pre-computer days, you analyzed each and every position, including any variations you thought up, with nothing more than a board and pieces, using your knowledge of the pieces' potential.

Thus the few errors are no reflection on the author's ability or knowledge at all. I have called attention to only the most egregious ones, indicated by an asterisk, and appearing on page 288. They certainly do not detract at all from the fresh charm he imparts on each and every position he looks at.

The Complete Chess Course in particular was originally brought out as a series of separate books that Fred later combined. The only part that is slightly out of date is his treatment of the openings, which are rather naïve by modern standards; however, that should make no difference at the intermediate or even national master level, as I know all too well.

Absorb the material included in this volume and you will play chess at a fairly high level. Or read through it all and enjoy Fred's masterful explanations; you will certainly be entranced by his enthusiasm for the intricate relationships the pieces experience in the context of a game or even a standout plan or combination.

The section on notation is the only portion of this work that Fred Reinfeld did not write. Since he used the old English descriptive notation exclusively, that section has been replaced with the gracious permission of David MacEnulty from his *My First Book of Chess Tactics*.

Peter Kurzdorfer
Olean, New York
October 2015

Introduction

Although seven of the eight sections of this book were originally published as separate volumes, they were written with their coordination as a complete chess course in mind. Conveniently prefaced now by a new summarized review of the basic elements of chess, the resulting comprehensive whole provides the instruction that any chessplayer needs to develop a respectable degree of skill.

The integrated progression of subjects is treated in the following order. A player who knows the elements but little more about chess may not need the introductory steps revealed in Book One, but he does need to be warned about the types of mistakes – neglected development and the like – that beginning and intermediate players make so frequently. He can then go on to study opening play in its larger aspects, and examine its consequences in the ensuing middlegame. From this point he proceeds to study the endgame stage, which evolves out of the middlegame previously studied. And finally, having seen the logical relationship which binds together opening, middlegame, and ending, the student is now ready to go back to the initial stage and study the chief openings in rewarding detail.

With this overall scheme in mind, the reader is in a better position to appreciate the detailed treatment in each section.

Book One is a summary of chess fundamentals that provides the first springboard into the “royal” game for beginners, and also serves as a refresher for the more advanced player.

Book Two is a study of the nine most common mistakes made by chessplayers. These include such typical errors as failing to guard against hostile captures, underestimating the opponent’s threats, and making pawn moves that weaken the castled position. Many examples are given to show how these and other mistakes prove disastrous in the opening and middlegame.

Now that the reader has been made aware of the kinds of mistakes he must avoid, he is ready to study the problem of planning the opening so as to get a promising middlegame position. First the subject is treated from White’s point of view (Book Three). Dealing with such problems as control of the center, how to exploit superior development and mobility, and the like. But it is at least equally important to deal with opening problems from Black’s point of view, and this brings us to Book Four; here problems of counterattack and defense are emphasized.

These studies of middlegame play lead logically to a treatment of the endgame stage, for whatever happens in the final part of the game is the consequence of what happened earlier in the opening and middlegame. As a rule, the chief practical problem of endgame play is how to win with a material advantage which has been obtained in the middlegame. In Book Five the different types of endings are classified and studied; many practical examples are explained, and the reader acquires an excellent grasp of the vital problem of converting a material advantage into victory.

But to know how to make use of advantages is not enough; so in Book Six we go on to the related problem of how to make the most of disadvantageous positions. This section contains many valuable pointers that will help the reader to salvage many an apparently lost game.

Now that opening, middlegame, and endgame have been surveyed, what remains? It is now time to survey the chess openings in some detail, paying particular attention to the way in which opening moves are intertwined with the ensuing middlegame play. This material appears in Books Seven and Eight. Each opening is presented with explanations of is *basic ideas* – the plans of each player, their middlegame goals, the clash that follows their attempts to enforce their disparate conceptions.

Throughout, my aim has been to give the reader a better idea of the fine points of chess as it is played by the masters. The appreciative comments I have had from readers encourage me to believe that a much wider circle of new readers will enjoy this material and apply it profitably in their own games.

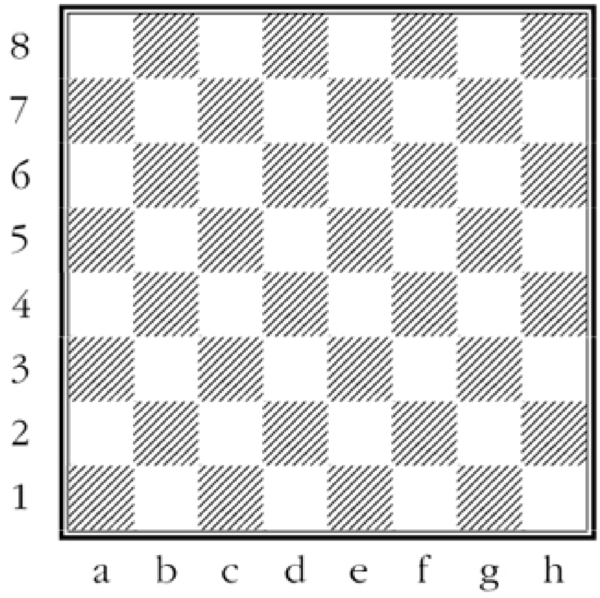
Fred Reinfeld

Book One

The Basic Rules of Chess

Chess is played by two opponents, “White” and “Black,” who take turns making their moves. White always makes the first move. The chessboard (Diagram 1) has eight horizontal rows (“ranks”) and eight vertical rows (“files”). Each row is therefore made up of eight squares.

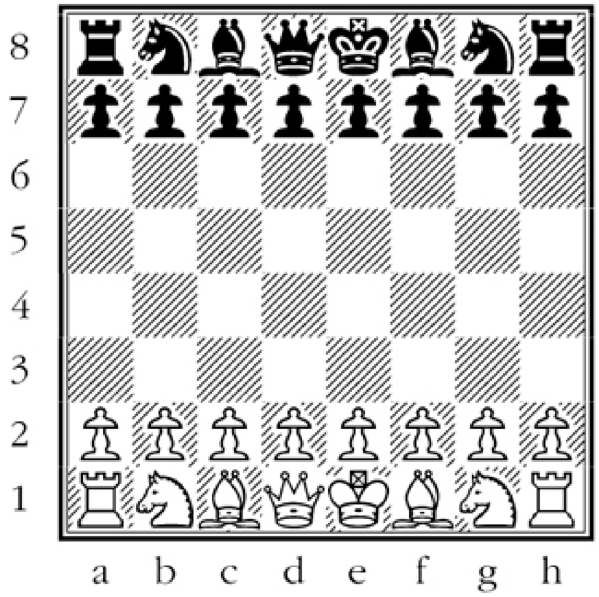
All 64 squares are used in the play, and in order to make it easier to tell them apart, they are alternately light colored (“light squares”) and dark colored (“dark squares”). (D)



1

The Chessboard

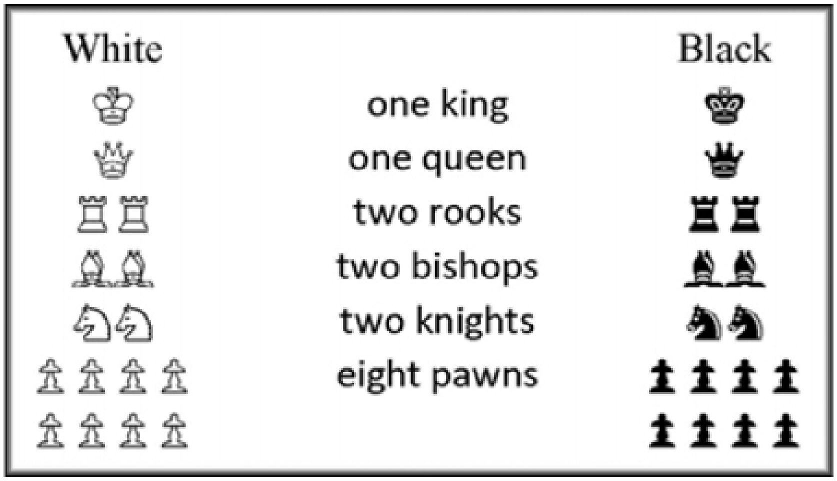
At the beginning of a game, each player has 16 chessmen, always placed as in Diagram 2. (D)



2

The Opening Position

White always takes the light colored chessmen; Black has the dark colored chessmen. The names of the forces shown in Diagram 2 are:



White		Black
♔	one king	♚
♕	one queen	♛
♖♖	two rooks	♜♜
♗♗	two bishops	♝♝
♘♘	two knights	♞♞
♙♙♙♙	eight pawns	♟♟♟♟
♙♙♙♙		♟♟♟♟

An important point to remember is that in the opening position the right-hand corner square nearest to White must be a light square.

Another important point about the opening position: the two queens face each other along the same vertical row (“the d-file”). Each queen is placed on a square of its own color, the white queen on a light square, the black queen on a dark square.

Both kings likewise face each other across the e-file.

The *king bishop* is placed next to the king, on the f-file.

The *king knight* is placed next to the king bishop, on the g-file.

The *king rook* is placed next to the king knight, on the h-file.

The *queen bishop* is placed next to the queen, on the c-file.

The *queen knight* is placed next to the queen bishop, on the b-file.

The *queen rook* is placed next to the queen knight, on the a-file.

The *white pawns* are set out on the second row (“the second rank”), in front of the pieces just named.

The *black pawns* are set out on the seventh row (“the seventh rank”), in front of the pieces just named.

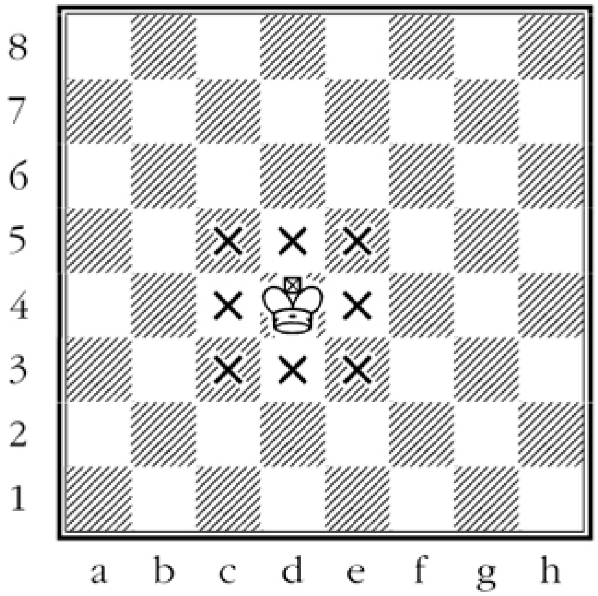
Each pawn is named for the file it stands on.

Thus, the pawn on the e-file (where the kings begin the game) is the *e-pawn*.

How the Pieces Move

Each of the men moves in a different way. In describing the moves it is necessary to refer to ranks, files, and also diagonals. (A diagonal is a row of squares of the same color all going in the same direction. In Diagram 2 the row of light squares from White’s king rook to Black’s queen rook is a diagonal.) **The King**

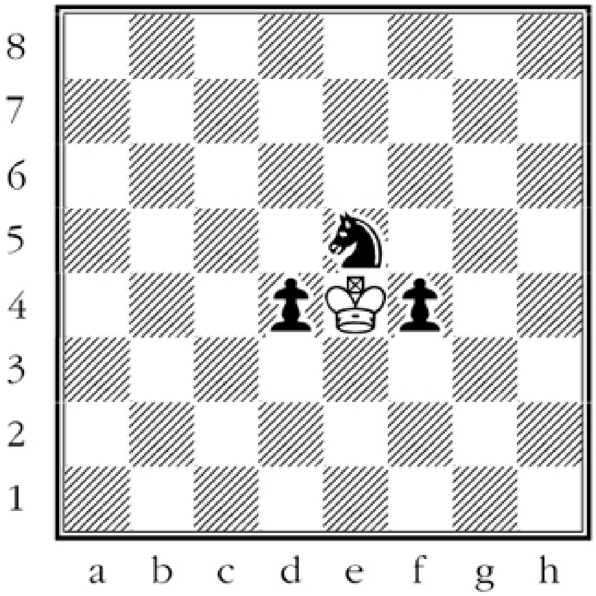
The king (subject to limitations that are described later on) moves one square in any direction. (D)



3

White’s king has eight possible moves, indicated by an “X.”

The king captures the same way it moves; when it captures an enemy piece it displaces that piece (occupies the square of the captured unit). (D)

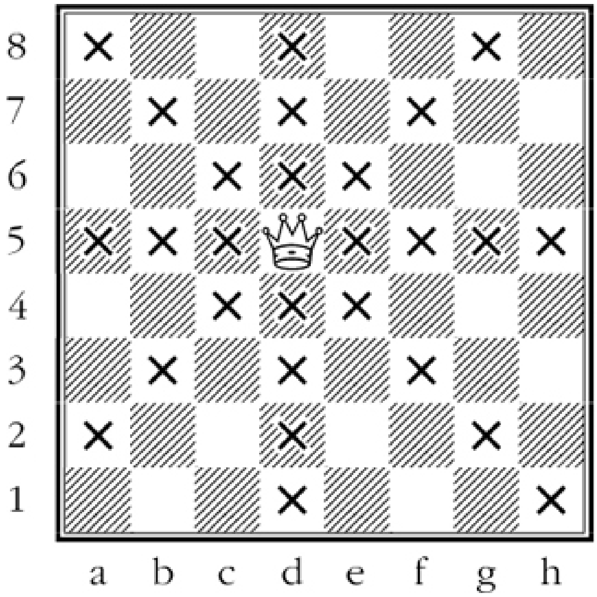


4

White's king can capture any one of the black men.

The Queen

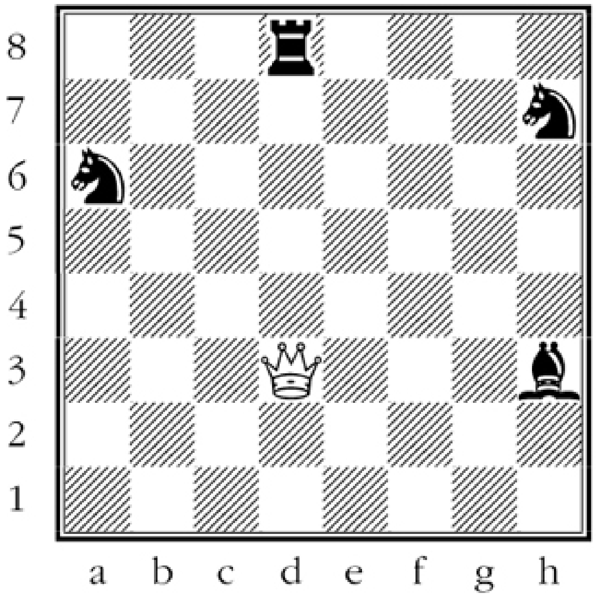
The queen is the most powerful of all the chess forces. Like the king, the queen can move in any direction – but with this important difference: the queen can move the whole length of any available line, as long as there is no obstacle in the way. (D)



5

The queen can move to any of the squares indicated by an "X"; it moves in only one direction at a time.

There are two possible obstacles: friendly pieces, which the queen cannot displace or leap over; or enemy pieces, which can be captured by displacement. (D)

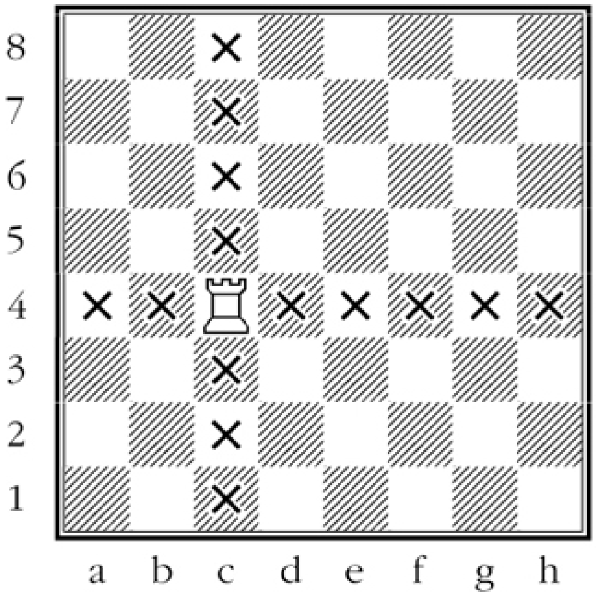


6

The white queen can capture the black rook or bishop or either black knight.

The Rook

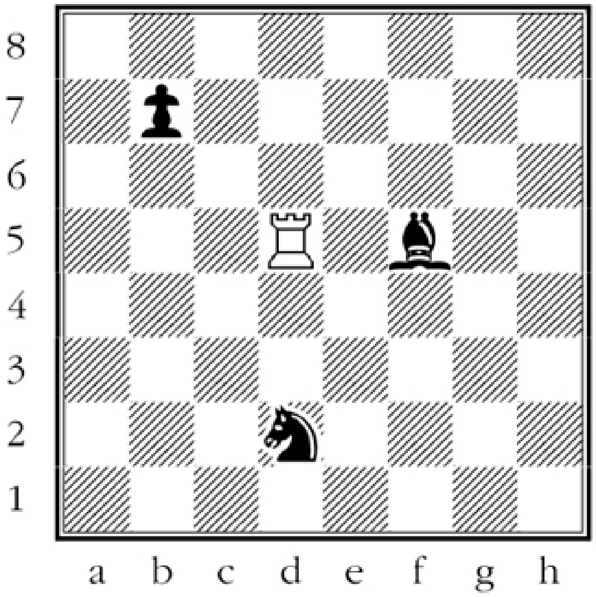
The rook (next most powerful piece after the queen) moves horizontally (on ranks) or vertically (on files) – one direction at a time. (D)



7

The rook can move to any square indicated by an "X."

The rook captures hostile pieces by displacement, but it cannot displace or leap over its own forces. The rook captures in the same way it moves. (Some players call the rook a "castle," but "rook" is the proper term.) (D)



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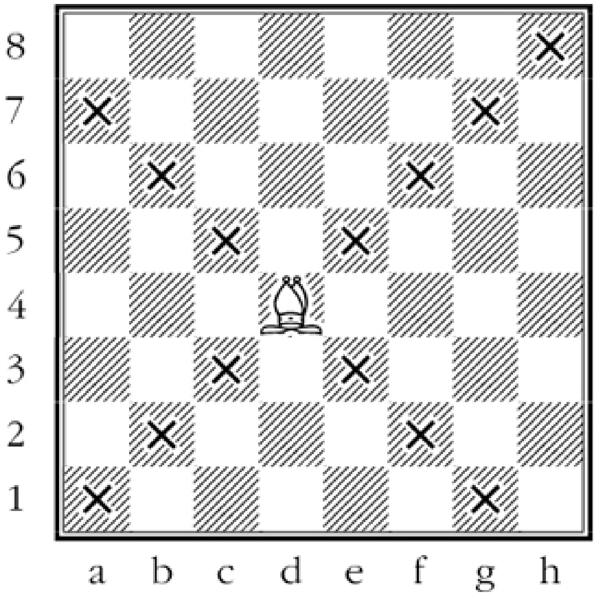
The rook can capture the bishop or knight, but not the pawn.

The Bishop

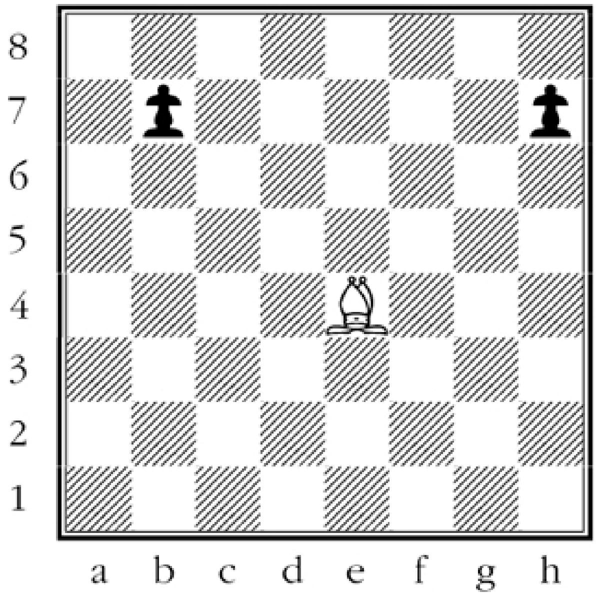
The bishop, moving in one direction at a time, moves and captures *diagonally*. (D)



9

The bishop can move to any of the squares indicated by an "X."

The bishop captures hostile pieces by displacement. It cannot displace or leap over its own forces. (D)



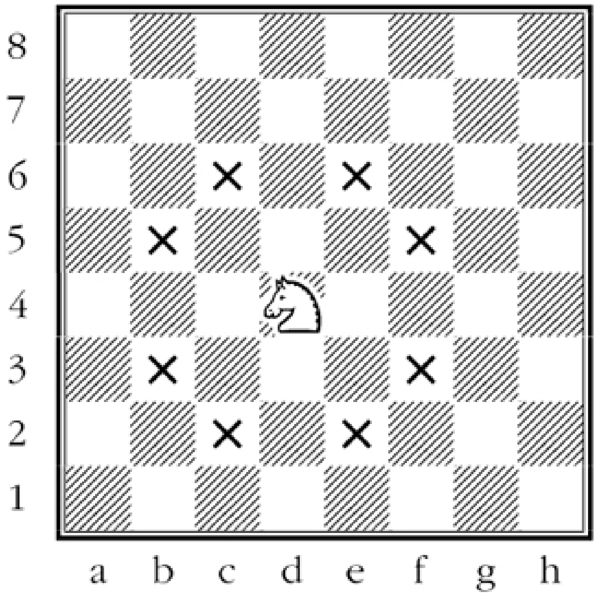
The bishop can capture either of the black pawns.

The Knight

The knight is the only piece that can leap over other units – his own or the opponent's. The knight is also the only piece that has a move of fixed length. It moves a total of three squares – in either one of two ways: (a) One square forward or backward; then two squares to the right or left.

(b) One square to the right or left; then two squares forward or backward.

The knight captures only on the terminal square of his move, displacing the piece it captures. (D)



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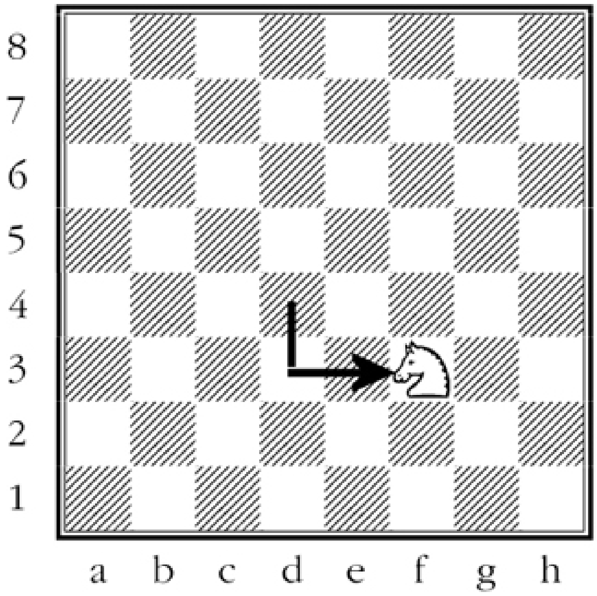
The knight has the option of moving to any square indicated by an “X.”



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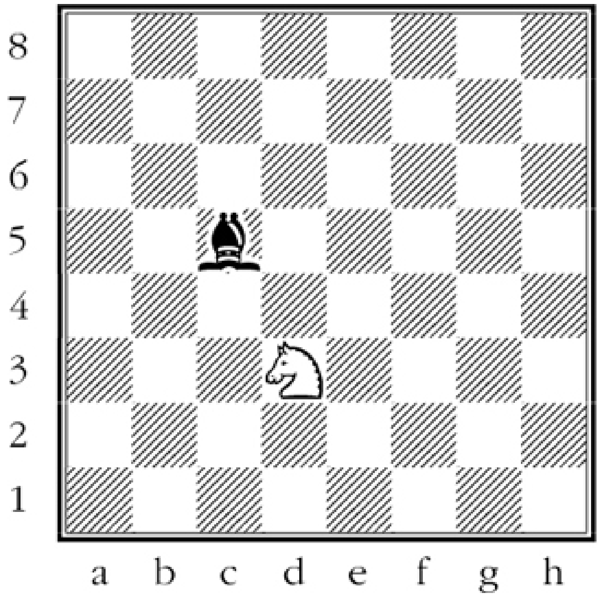
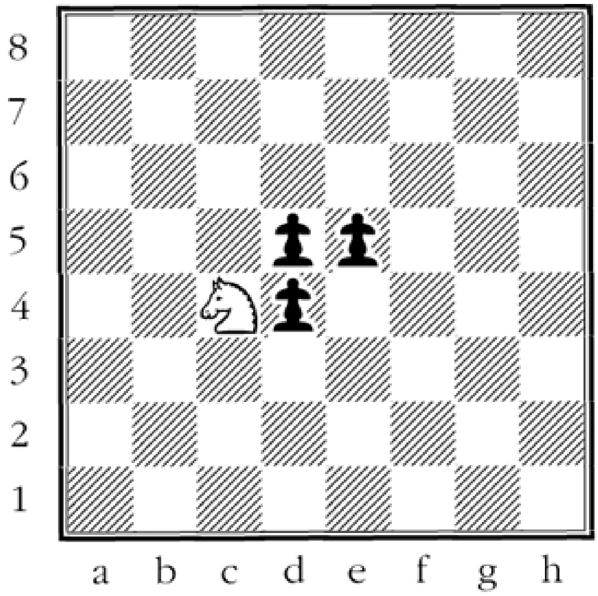
This is one of the eight possible moves available to the knight in Diagram 11.

Note that the knight changes the color of its square each time it moves. It goes from a light square to a dark square or from a dark square to a light square. (D)



13

The white knight can capture Black's bishop.



14

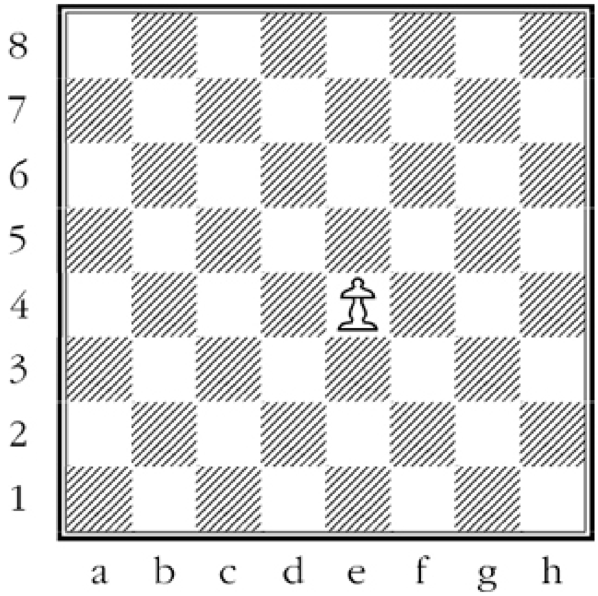
The knight leaps over two pawns to capture the most distant pawn.

The Pawn

The pawn is the only unit that is limited to moving in only one direction: straight ahead.

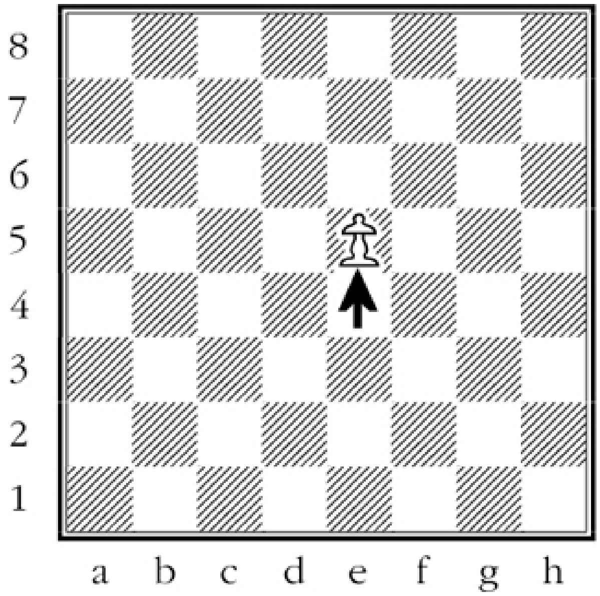
With one exception (to be noted shortly), a pawn moves one square forward unless its path is blocked by one of its own units or by a hostile unit.

The path for white pawns (as seen in Diagram 2) is directly forward from the opening position. How a white pawn moves is shown in detail on Diagrams 15 and 16. (D)



15

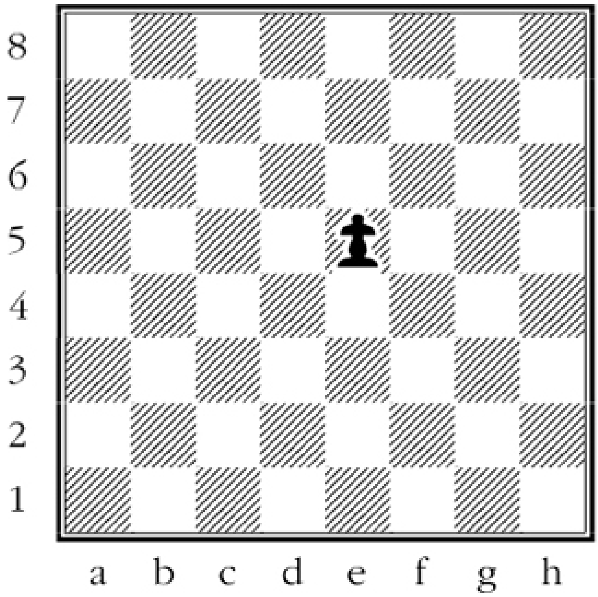
The white pawn is about to move.



16

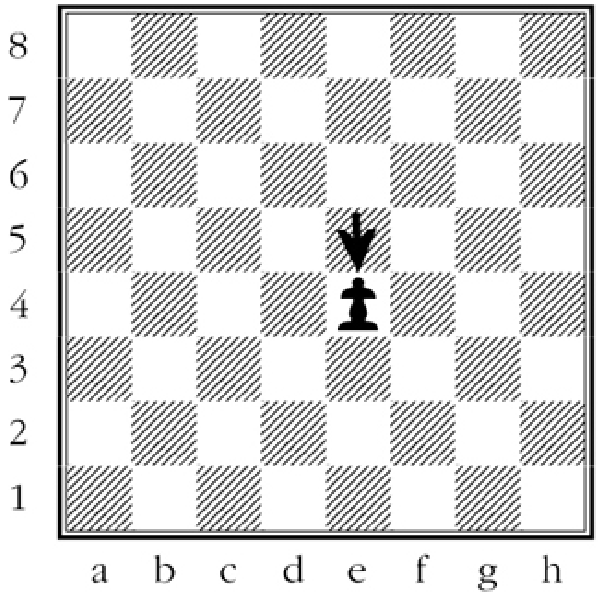
The white pawn has moved.

The path for black pawns (likewise seen in Diagram 2) is also directly forward from the opening position. How a black pawn moves is shown in Diagrams 17 and 18. (D)



17

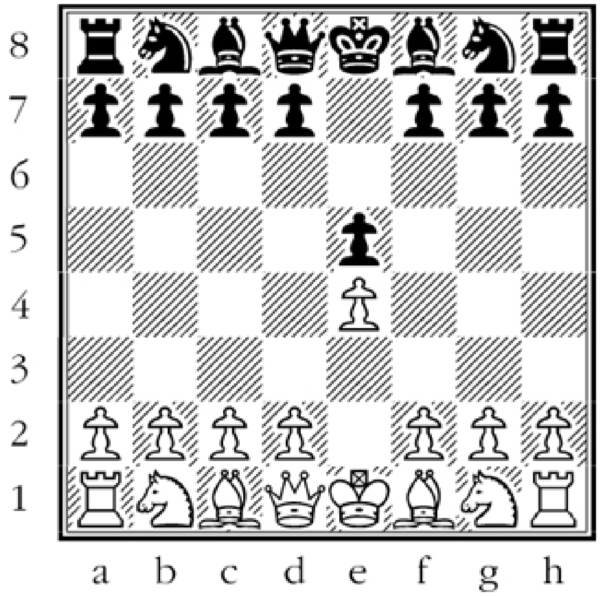
The black pawn is about to move.



18

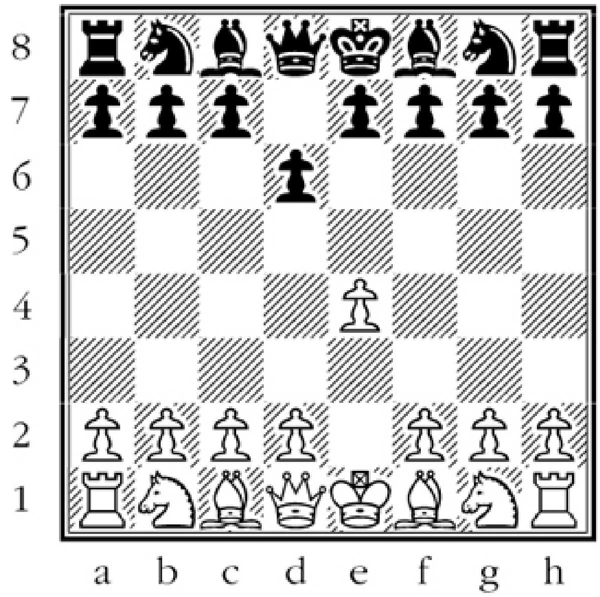
The black pawn has moved.

The pawn has one important option. When any pawn is moved from its opening position – even if this occurs at a late stage of the game – that pawn on its first move has the option of moving one square or two. Thus, in Diagram 2 (the opening position) all the pawns, while on the second rank (for White; seventh for Black) have the option of moving one square or two. (D)



19

White has accepted his option by advancing his e-pawn two squares. Black has done likewise.

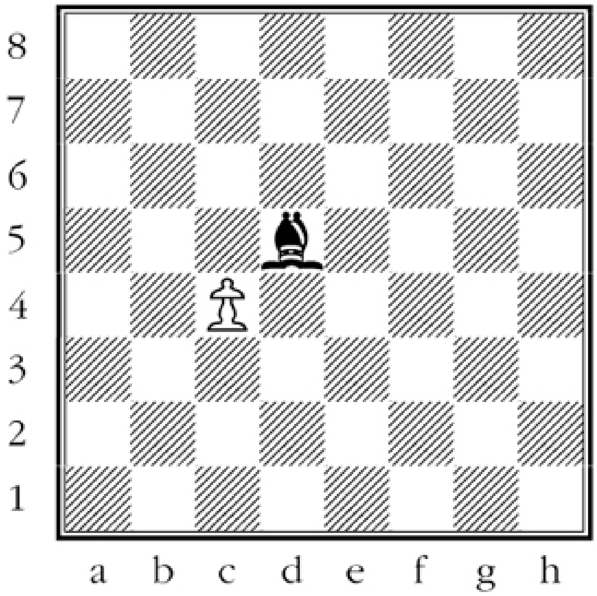


20

White has accepted the option of advancing his e-pawn two squares. Black, however, has advanced his d-pawn one square.

The pawn’s capturing methods differ from the way it moves.

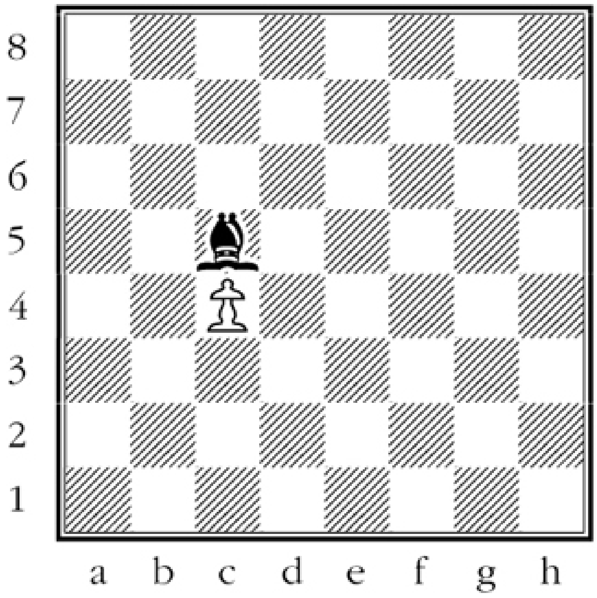
The pawn moves by advancing straight along a file. In capturing, however, the pawn can take a hostile unit only if it is located on either of the *diagonally-forward adjoining squares* – that is, one square forward to the right or left. (D)



21

The white pawn can capture the black bishop.

The pawn *cannot* capture a hostile unit which is directly in front of it. (D)



22

The white pawn cannot capture the black bishop.

Check and Checkmate

The king is the most important piece in chess.

The basic method of winning a game of chess is *to attack the hostile king in such a way that it cannot escape*. This is called "checkmate." (The king is actually not captured; its inability to escape from attack is what constitutes the checkmate.) Any attack by a piece or pawn directly on a king is called a "check." When a king is checked, it must *immediately* get out of check. The king cannot be allowed to remain in check.

If it is a player's turn to move and his king is not in check, he cannot make any move that exposes the king to check. The king must never come within the capturing range of hostile pieces.

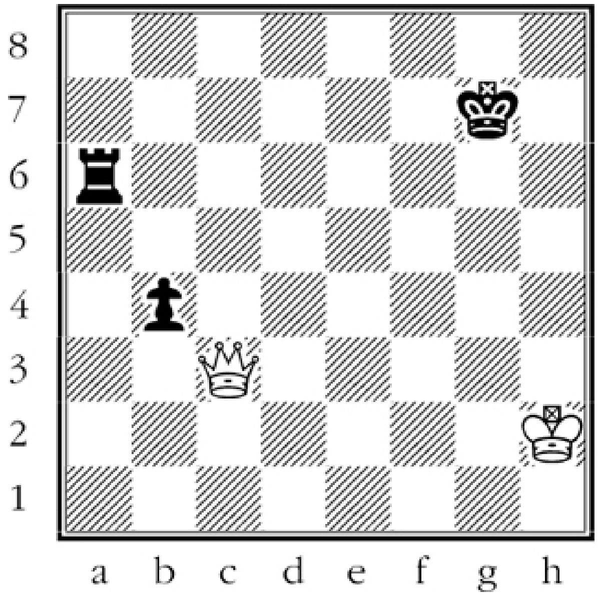
There are three ways to get out of check:

(1) to capture the unit that is giving check;

(2) to move the king out of the line of attack – but not into the line of attack of some other unit; (3) to interpose one of your own units between the king and the hostile unit that is giving check.

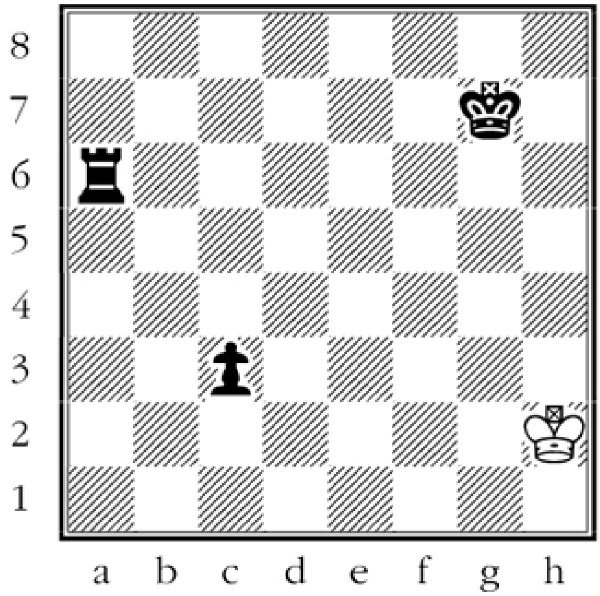
If none of these three methods can be applied, then the king is checkmated.

In Diagrams 23 and 24 the black king was in check, but it was possible to get out of check. In Diagram 25 the attacked king is able to escape; but in Diagram 26 the attacked king is checkmated. (D)



23

White's queen is checking the black king. Black has a choice of three different ways of getting his king out of check.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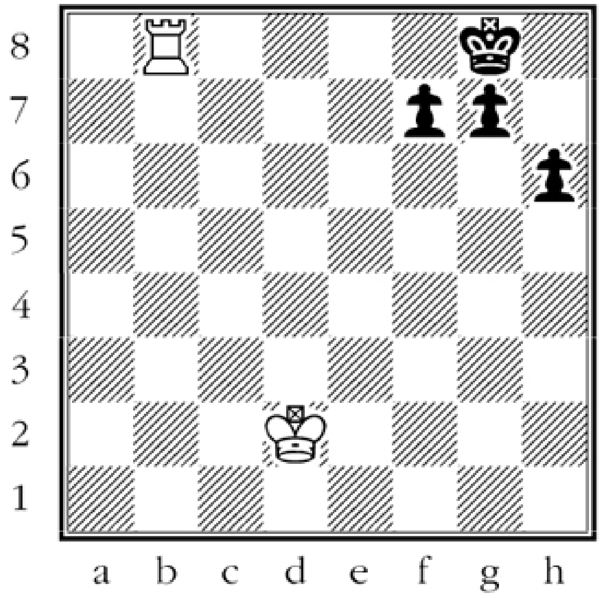
Black has captured the white queen, getting out of check. Black could also have moved his king, or interposed his rook.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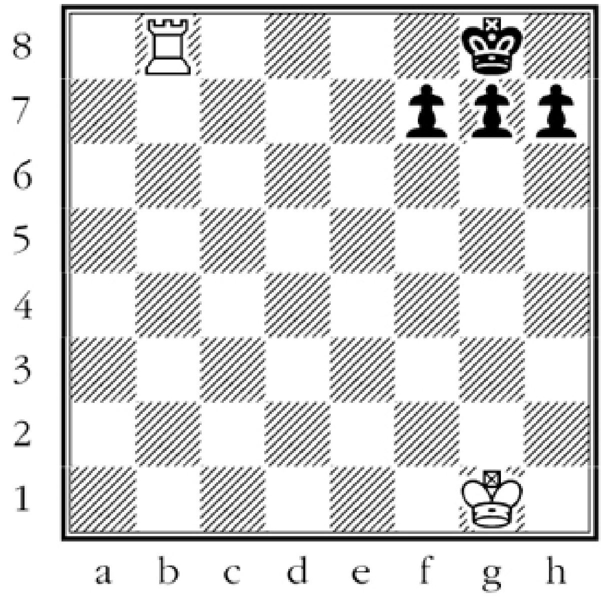
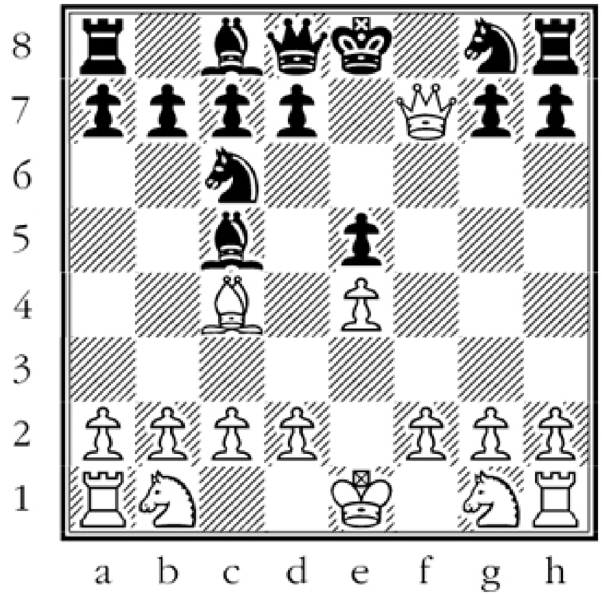
Black's king is checkmated. White's queen is giving check and Black's king cannot capture the white queen, which is protected by a white bishop. Having no flight square, or way of interposing a friendly unit, Black's king is trapped.

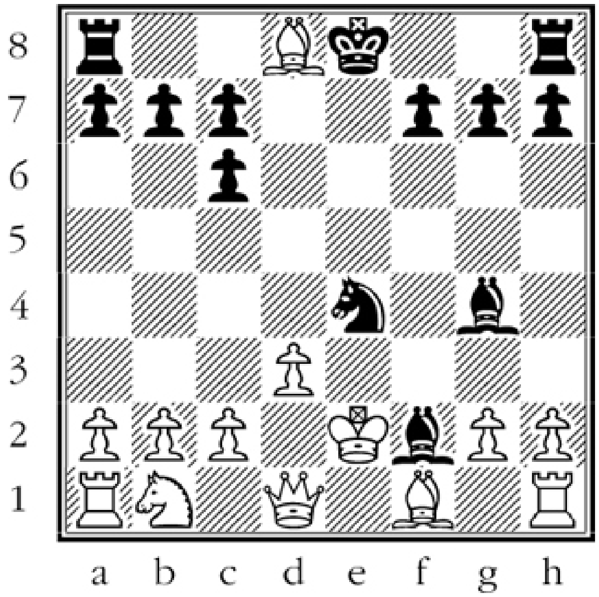

26

Black's king is in check from White's rook but it has a "loophole." By playing his king diagonally forward to the right, Black escapes from the check.

The positions in Diagrams 26, 27, and 28 are all examples of checkmate. In each case the checking piece cannot be captured; the attacked king cannot move out of the capturing range of the hostile forces; and no friendly unit can be interposed on the line of attack between the checking unit and the checked king. (D)


27

Black's king is in check from White's rook and has no escape, as its own pawns block the exit. This is an example of checkmate.

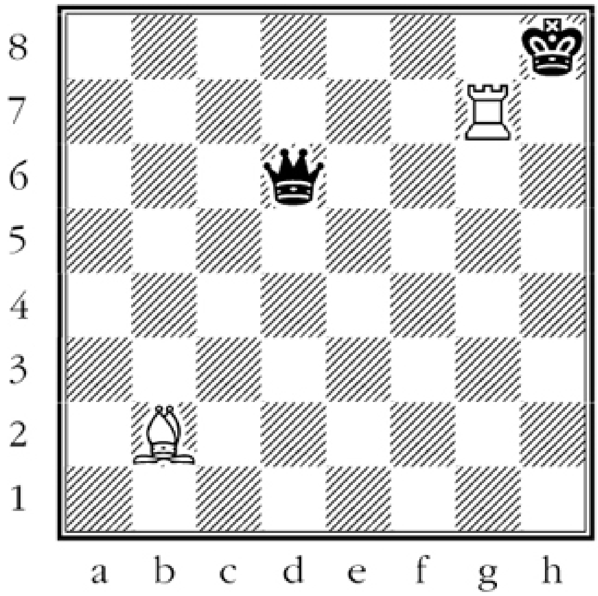


28

White's king is checkmated. White has no escape from the black bishop's check. Note that Black's knight and bishops command all the possible squares available to White's king, and White cannot interpose any of his own units.

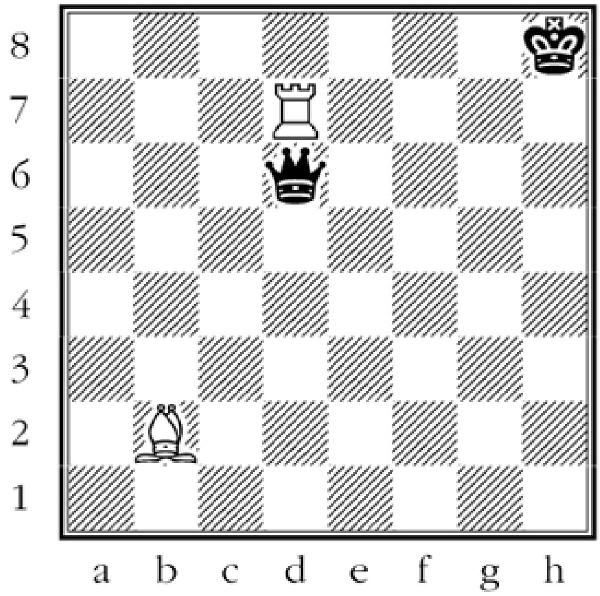
Discovered Check

This is a special kind of check, caused by removing a unit to unmask a line of attack by another unit. For example, in Diagram 29 White's bishop can give check without moving; the check is "discovered" by moving the white rook which has been blocking the diagonal. The result appears in Diagram 30. (D)



29

White can give a discovered check with his bishop by moving his rook.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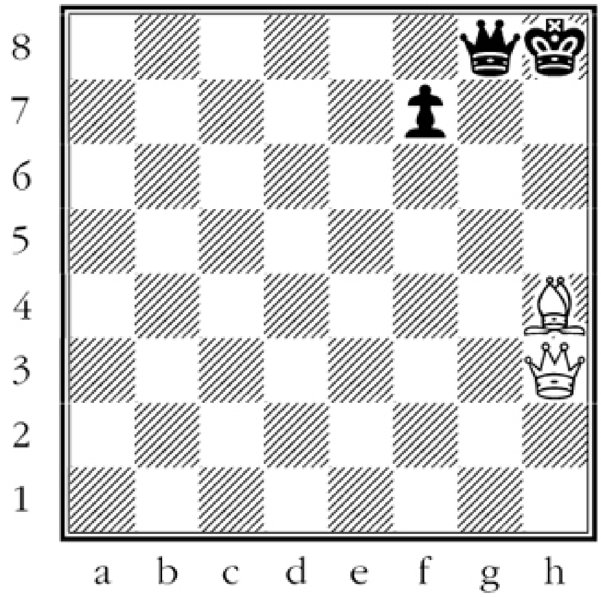
30

By moving his rook, White has opened up an attacking line for a discovered check by his bishop.

Double Check

This is a discovered check with an added feature: the piece that unmasks an attacking line for the discovered check also gives check. (D)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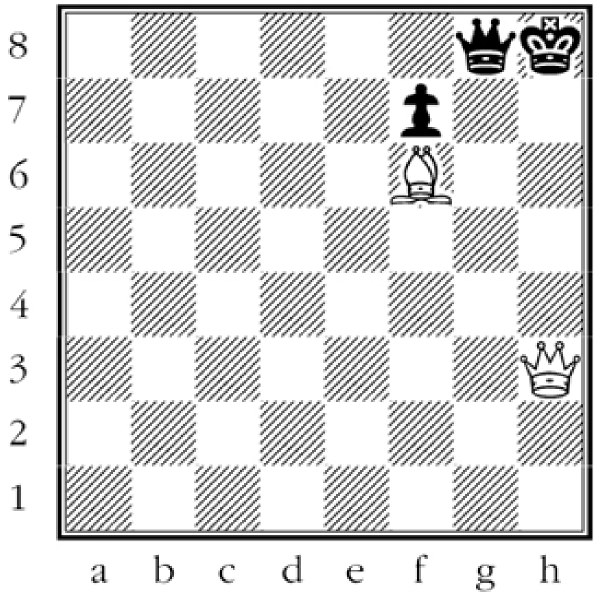
31

By moving his bishop to give check, White can give double check with his queen.



32

As Black's king cannot move out of check, he is checkmated. The double check was devastating.

The double check is the most difficult kind of check to meet, as capture or interposition is impossible. For if either checking unit is captured, the other unit continues to give check. Similarly, an interposition to one check still leaves the other check functioning.

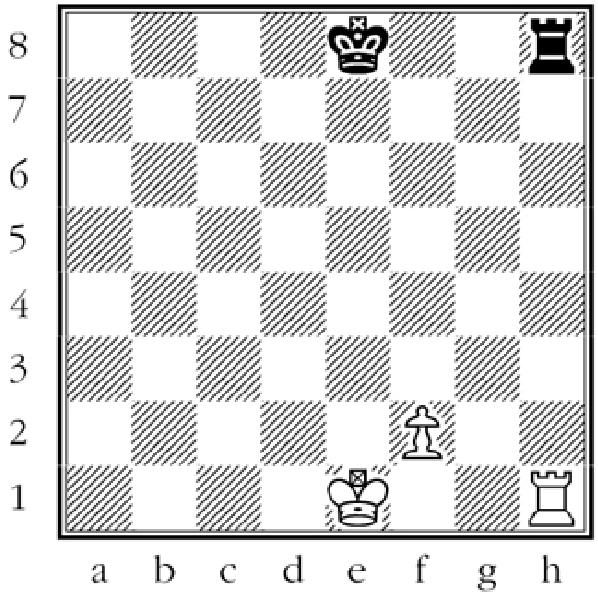
The only possible reply to a double check, then, is to move the attacked king. Where this is not feasible, the king is checkmated.

Castling

We have seen what happens when the king is exposed to attack. The special move known as "castling" offers a valuable method for safeguarding the king against attack.

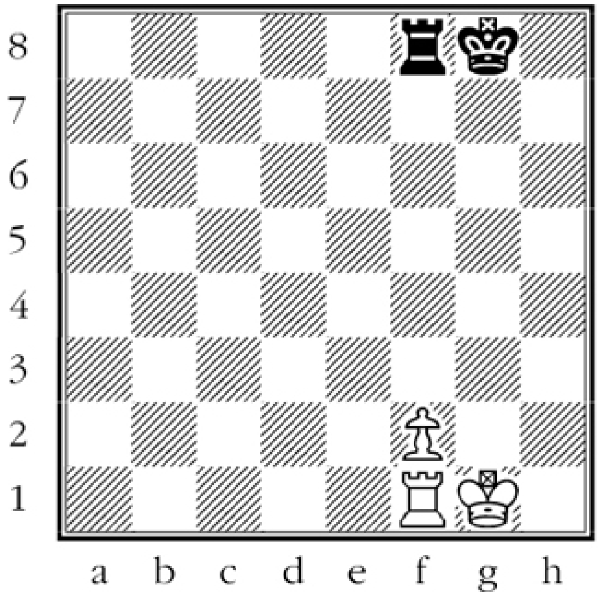
Castling is the only move in chess which is really two separate moves – a king move and a rook move. Castling, as well, is the only move that each player can carry out only once during a game.

It is possible to castle with the king and king rook (kingside castling) or with the king and queen rook (queenside castling). Diagrams 33 and 34 show how kingside castling is accomplished. (D)



33

Before kingside castling (king and king rook)



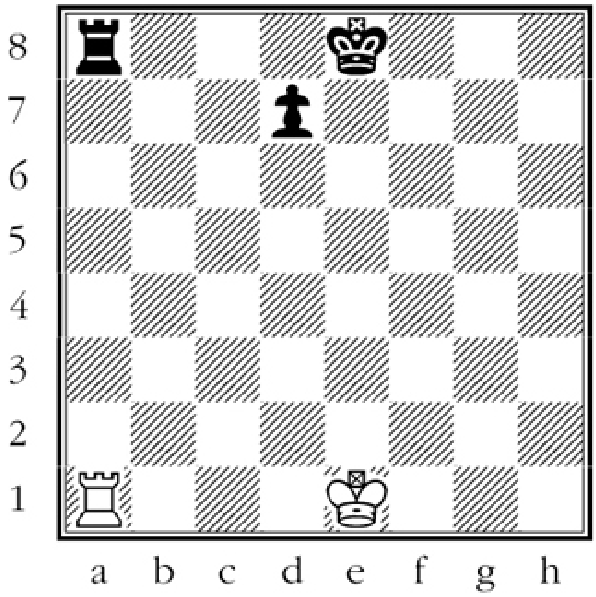
34

After kingside castling

To castle kingside, a player moves his king two squares, landing next to the king rook.

He then moves his rook to the other side of the king. When castling is completed, the castled king and rook are on adjacent squares, as in Diagram 34.

Queenside castling is illustrated in Diagrams 35 and 36. (D)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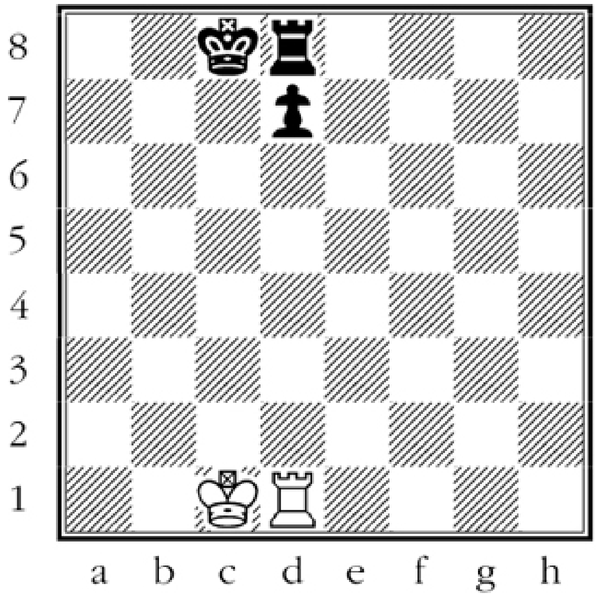
a b c d e f g h

35

Before queenside castling
(king and queen rook)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a b c d e f g h

36

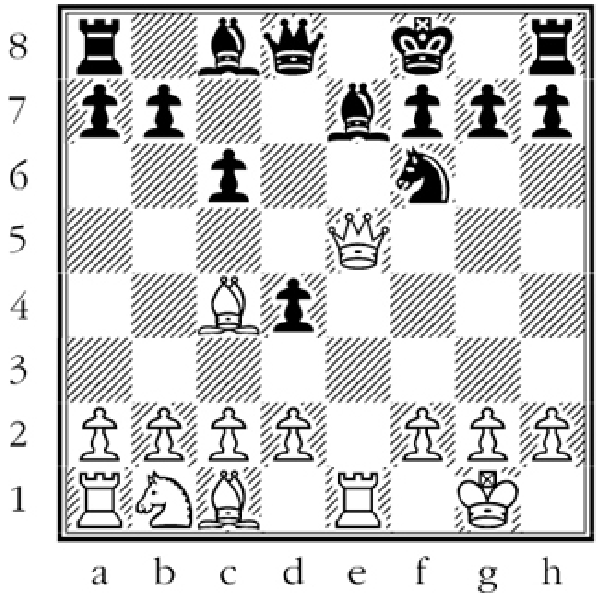
After queenside castling

Requirements for Castling

Castling is permanently impossible if:

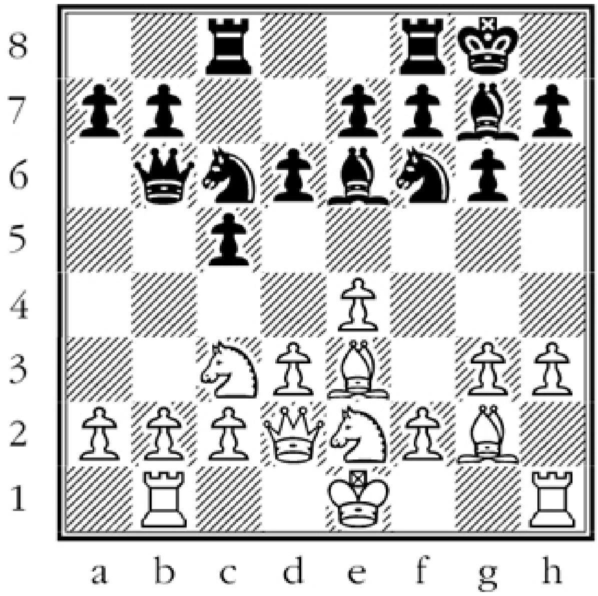
(1) The king has already moved (Diagram 37) or;

(2) The rook intended for castling has already moved (Diagram 38). (D)



37

Black cannot now castle because his king has moved from its original square.



38

White can castle kingside. (His king rook is still on its original square and has not moved.)

When Castling is Impossible

Castling is impossible when:

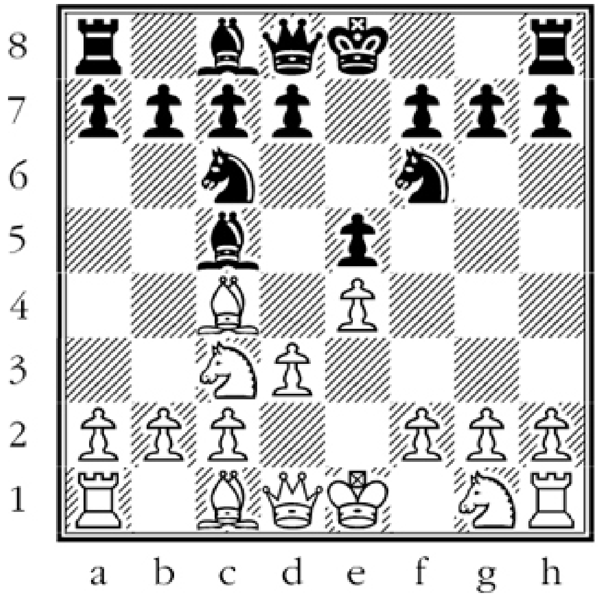
(1) The squares between the king and rook are not all vacant (Diagram 39).

(2) A player’s king is in check (Diagram 40).

(3) The king has to pass over a square commanded by an enemy unit (Diagram 41).

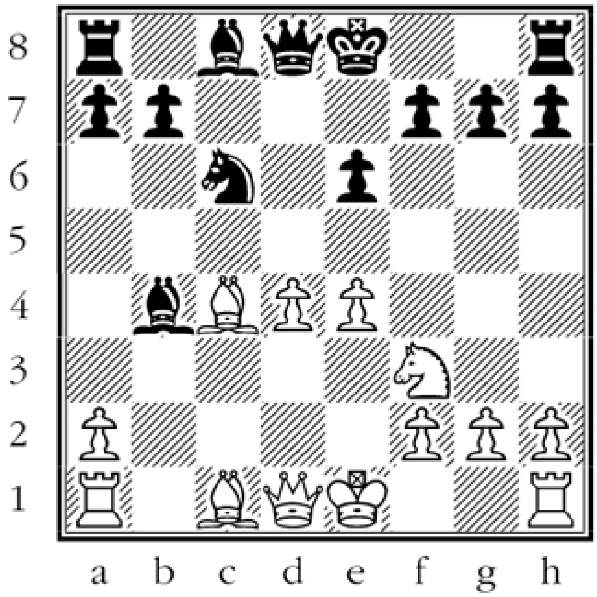
(4) The king will land on a square commanded by an enemy unit (Diagram 42).

While castling is impossible as long as any of these conditions apply, castling becomes feasible as soon as all limiting conditions are removed. (D)



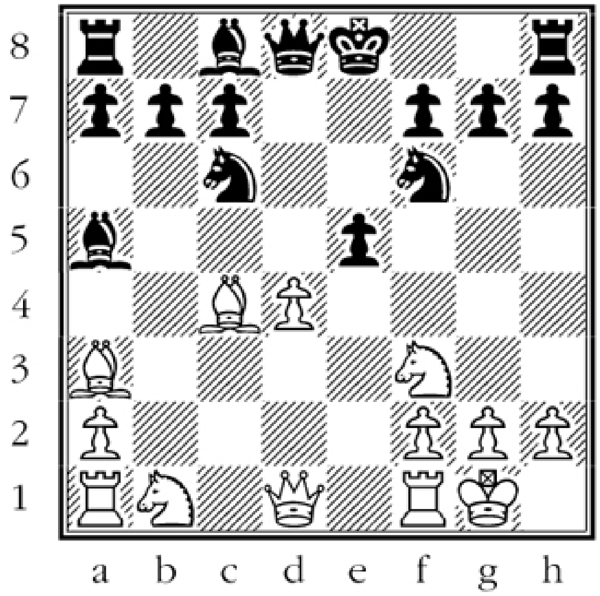
39

White cannot castle because one of the squares between his king and king rook is still occupied.



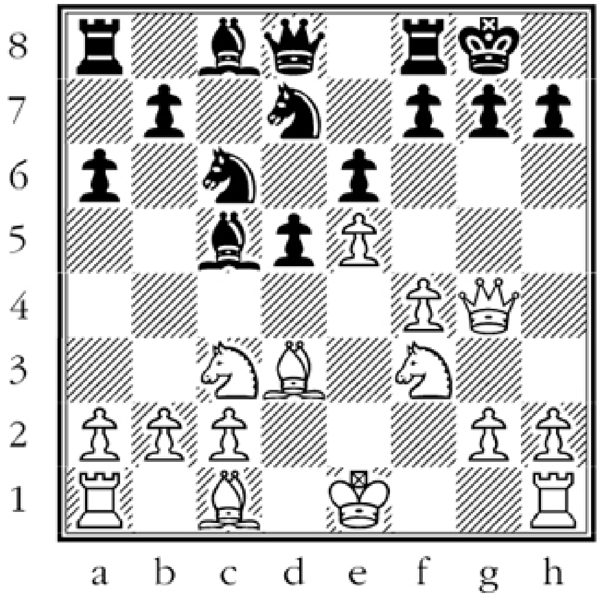
40

White cannot castle because his king is at the moment being checked by the black bishop.



41

Black cannot castle because in order to do so his king would have to pass over a square controlled by White’s dark-square bishop.



42

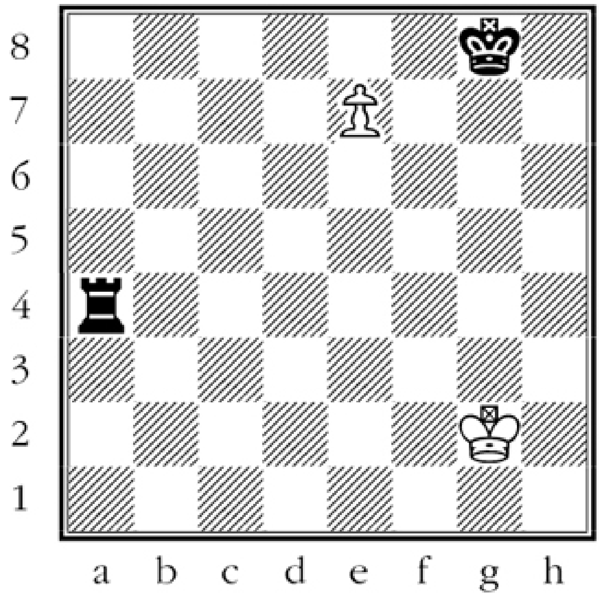
White cannot castle because the square on which his king would land is controlled by Black’s dark-square bishop.

Additional Powers of the Pawn

The pawn is the least valuable of all the chess units, yet it has one power which enhances its value considerably in special situations.

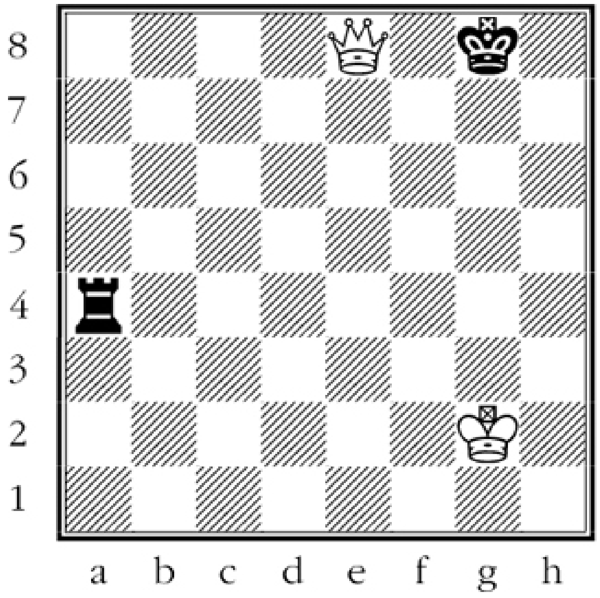
Pawn Promotion

If a pawn reaches the last square in a file, it is promoted – must be promoted – to a friendly queen or a rook or a bishop or a knight. White the player has the option here, he usually chooses a new queen, as this is the most powerful of all the chess units. This process, known as “promoting” or “queening” a pawn, is illustrated in Diagrams 43 and 44. (D)



43

White’s pawn is about to advance to the eighth rank and be promoted. White has decided to take a new queen, giving check at the same time.



44

White has queened his pawn, giving check and forcing the black king to move. White will then capture the black rook.

Pawn Captures *en passant* (“In Passing”)

This is a special capturing option which a player can exercise when any of his pawns have reached the fifth rank (for White, or the fourth rank for Black). This is possible only if *all* the following conditions are present: (1) The pawn that will do the capturing must be on the fifth rank (for White, or the fourth rank for Black).

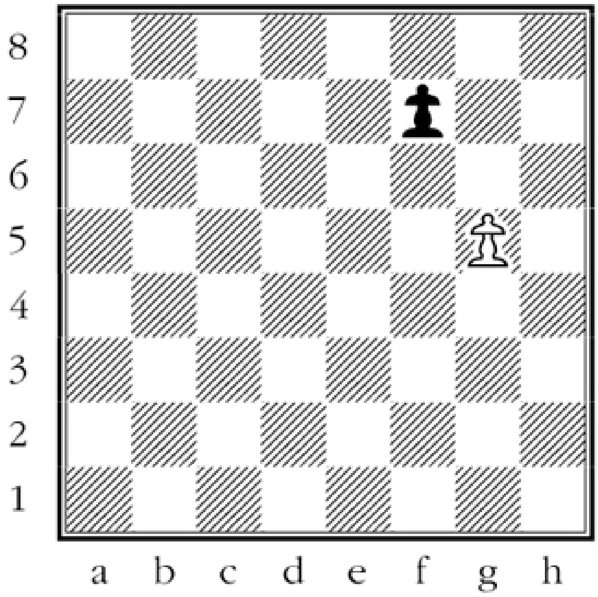
(2) The pawns involved must be on adjacent files.

(3) The pawn that will ultimately be captured must still be on its original rank (seventh for Black or second for White).

(4) The pawn that is to be captured advances two squares (Diagram 46).

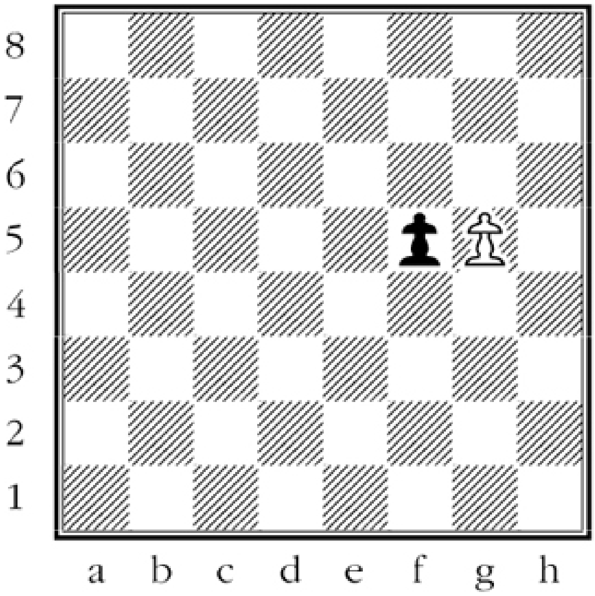
(5) In reply, the opposing pawn captures the first pawn as if it had advanced only one square (Diagram 47).

Remember that only a pawn can capture in passing, and only a pawn can be captured in passing. (D)



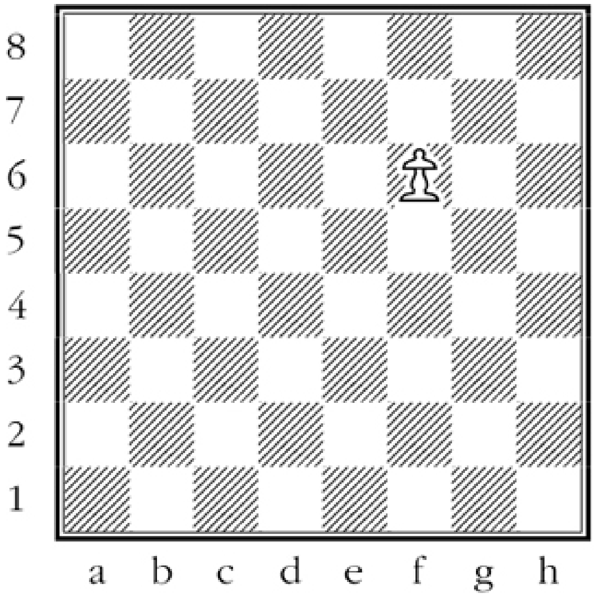
45

Here is a situation in which only pawns are involved; they are on adjacent files; the black pawn is on its original rank, the White pawn has reached the fifth rank. It is Black to move.



46

Black exercises his option and advances his pawn two squares. White can now capture Black's pawn "in passing," producing Diagram 47.



47

White has captured in passing as if the black pawn had only advanced one square and had been captured in the normal manner.

As a rule, capturing in passing is optional. However, if a player does not make the capture in passing at the first opportunity, he loses his option.

There are two cases when capturing or not capturing in passing is compulsory. If the only way to get out of check is by means of an en passant capture, then the capture must be made. Likewise, if capturing in passing would expose one's king to attack, then the capture cannot be made.

How Moves Are Recorded

Fred Reinfeld’s original work was in what is known as “English Description Notation.” That method of recording chess games is no longer used. The modern method is called “English Algebraic Notation.” The following section is reprinted, with permission, from *My First Book of Chess Tactics* by David MacEnulty.

NAMING THE SQUARES

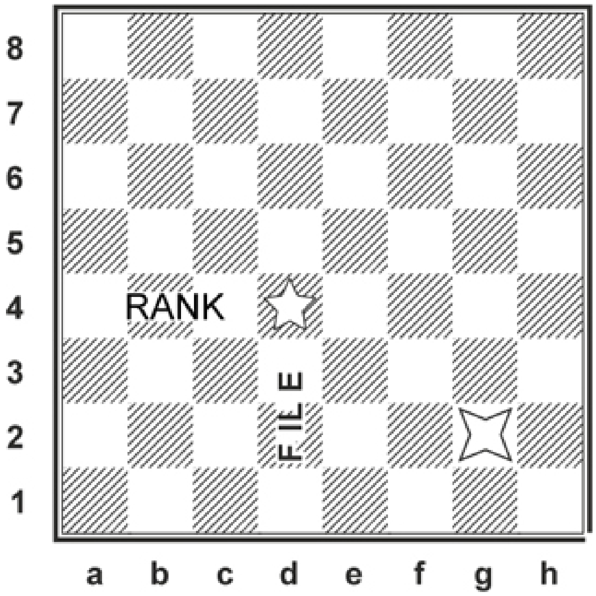
To understand this book, you must understand algebraic notation.
Fortunately, algebraic notation is easy to learn. The first thing to learn is how we name squares.

The chessboard is a square arrangement of sixty-four smaller squares, laid out in eight rows of eight squares each.

The rows going sideways are called ranks.
Ranks are numbered 1 through 8.

The rows going up and down the board are called files.
Files are named after the first eight letters of the alphabet, a through h.

Squares are named after the file they are on and the rank they are on. Each square has only one name, which is made up of a letter and a number.



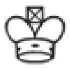
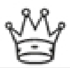
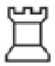
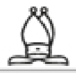
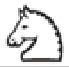
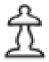
As an example of how we name squares, the five-point star in this diagram is on the d-file and also on the 4th rank. So the star is on the square we call d4.

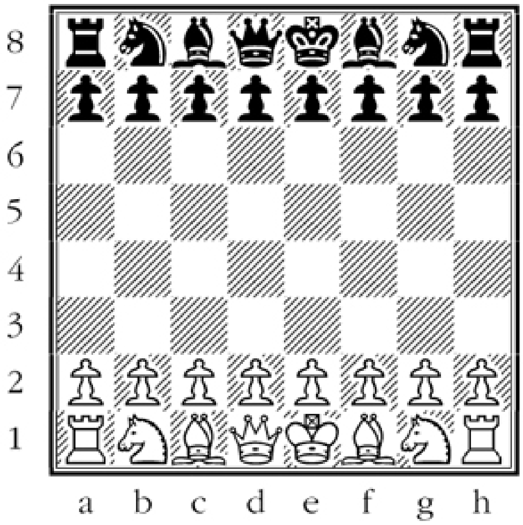
The “d” is a lowercase letter, and the letter comes before the number. We would not write this as D4, nor would we write it 4d. In chess we always name the file first, and it is always a lowercase letter.

What square is the four-point star on?
The four-point star on the previous page is on g2.

NAMING THE PIECES

There are six different pieces in the chess army. Below are the names of the pieces, the symbol used in notation, and a picture of what it looks like on our diagrams.

Name	Symbol	Picture
King	**K**	
Queen	**Q**	
Rook	**R**	
Bishop	**B**	
Knight	**N**	
Pawn	**P**	



Note that we use only upper case letters as symbols for the pieces. That way there is no confusion between the upper case B for bishop and the lower case b for the b-file.

You may have noticed that even though the word knight is spelled with a ‘K’ as the first letter, we use the letter N as the symbol. That’s because we need the letter K for the king.

Other symbols used in chess:

x	in the writing of a move indicates that the move involves a capture.
+	at the end of a move indicates that this move puts the opposing king in check.
+ +	at the end of a move indicates a double check See Book 2, page 40
#	at the end of a move indicates that this move gives checkmate.
0-0	is used to indicate castling on the kingside, where there are two squares between the king and rook.
0-0-0	is used to indicate castling on the queenside, where there are three squares between the king and rook.
1-0	means White wins.
0-1	means Black wins.
½-½	means the game is a draw.
!	indicates a strong move.
!!	indicates a brilliant move.
?	indicates a weak move or a mistake.
??	indicates a blunder, possibly a losing move.
!?	indicates an interesting move.
? !	indicates a dubious move.

READING AND WRITING CHESS NOTATION

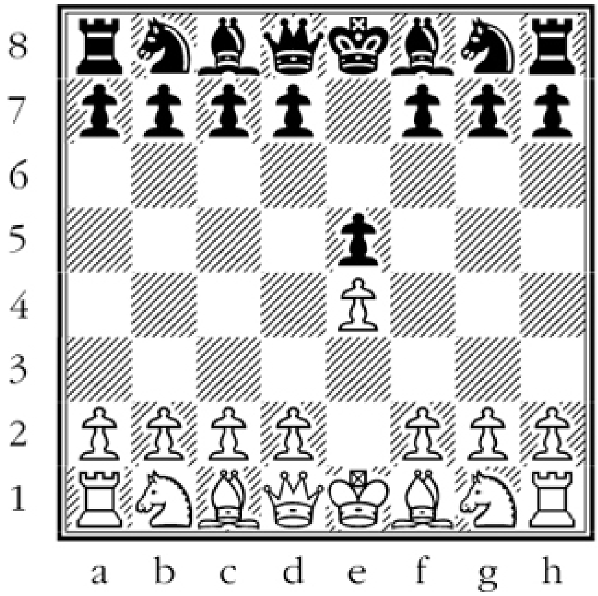
Reading and writing chess notation is simple once you know the names of the pieces and the names of the squares.

There are various forms of notation, but the most popular form, and the easiest to understand, is algebraic notation.

First, we begin with a number. The number simply tells us which move we are on. So, if there is a 1 in front, it’s the first move. If there is a 5 in front, it is the fifth move.

Next comes the symbol for the piece that is moving: K for king, Q for queen, B for bishop, N for knight, or R for rook. We do not give the symbol for the moving unit if it is a pawn.

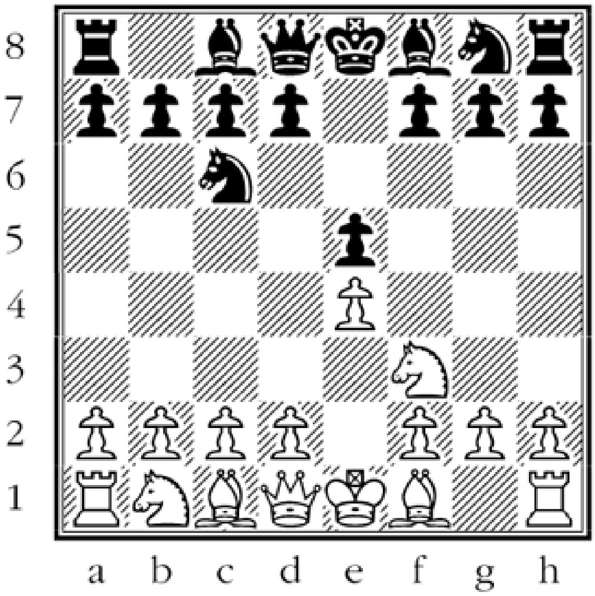
Finally, we name the square the piece is moving to.



49

In this diagram, White has moved a pawn from e2 to e4, and Black has moved a pawn from e7 to e5. Since this is the first move for each side, we write this as: **1e4 e5**

White’s move is on the left. Black’s is on the right. Since these are pawns, we do not use the symbol for the moving unit.



50

On move two, both sides brought out a knight. Now the moves are written like this: **1 e4 e5**

2 Nf3 Nc6

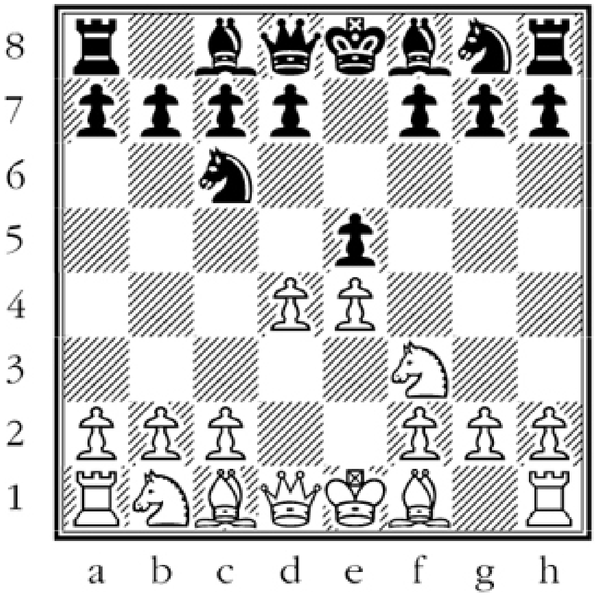
Note that we use the letter N for knight.

White’s next move will be

3 d4

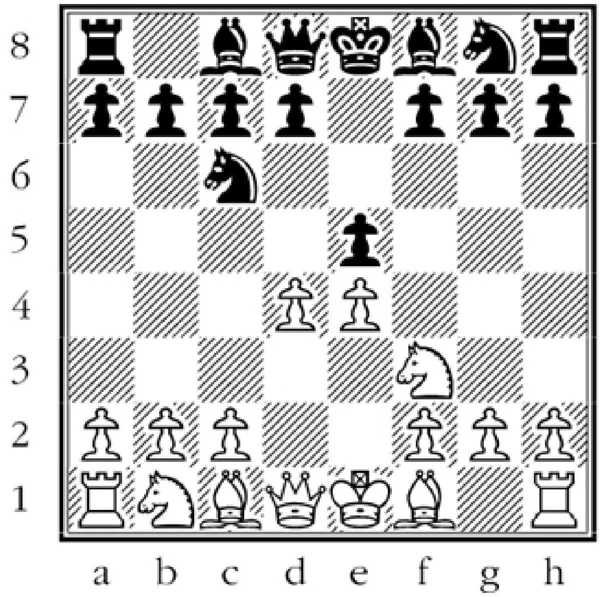
Diagram after move 3 on the next page.

Is this what you thought it would look like?



51

The position after **3 d4**



52

For Black’s third move, he takes the pawn on d4. We write this as

3 … exd4 (see diagram)

The 3 means it is the third move of this sequence. The three dots signify that it is Black’s move. The ‘x’ means that a capture has taken place.

This move can also be written as ed. Since no piece is named, we know this is a pawn move. Since the capture involved two files, a pawn has just changed files, which only happens when a pawn is making a capture.

In this book, the moves are often written in paragraph form. The moves we have shown so far would look like this: **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4.**

If two similar pieces can both get to the same square, you must note which one is moving. For example say you have a knight on c3 and another knight on d2. Since they can each move to e4, if one of the knights moves to e4, we need to know which one. Say the knight on c3 moves to e4. This would be written as **1 Nce4.** That way we know it is the knight on c3, and not the knight on d2, that is moving to e4.

One final note: We will be using the “figurine” icons of each piece. (See the “Picture” column on page 22.) Using Figurine Algebraic Notation, the moves shown above look like this: **1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 exd4**

Relative Values of the Chess Pieces

It is essential to know the values of the chess units to avoid giving up a unit of greater value in return for a unit of lesser value.

In addition, you will discover that when you have an advantage in the values of your units (a material advantage), it is generally possible to force checkmate or the queening of a pawn. Consequently you have to understand clearly the nature of your material advantage if you capture a hostile unit without giving up one of your own in exchange.

Here are the relative values of the chess units:

Queen	9 points
Rook	5points
Bishop	3 points
Knight	3 points
Pawn	1 point

(The king is not included in this table, as it cannot be captured.)

The queen is clearly the most valuable piece by far.

Bishop and knight are of equal value. Giving up a knight for a bishop (or the reverse) is considered an equal exchange.

If a player captures a rook in return for a knight (or bishop), he is said to "*win the exchange*." If he captures a knight (or bishop) in return for a rook, he is said to "*lose the exchange*."

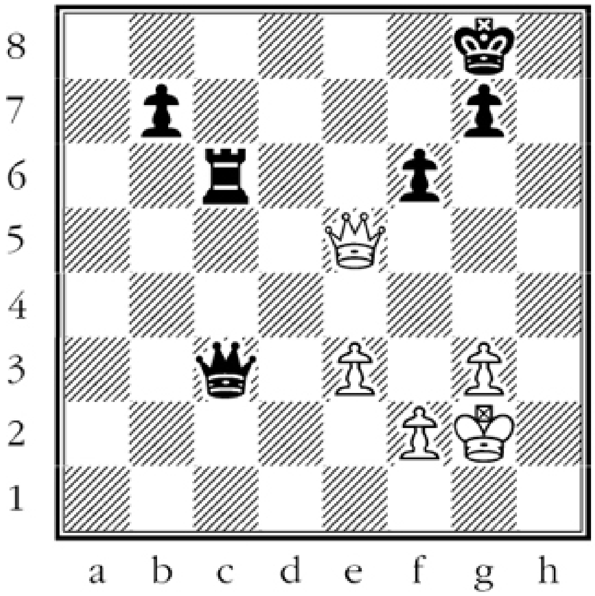
How Games are Drawn

Most chess games end decisively – victory for one player, defeat for his opponent.

But there are times when the result is indecisive; neither side wins; the game is a "draw." There are several ways in which a drawn result may be arrived at.

Perpetual Check

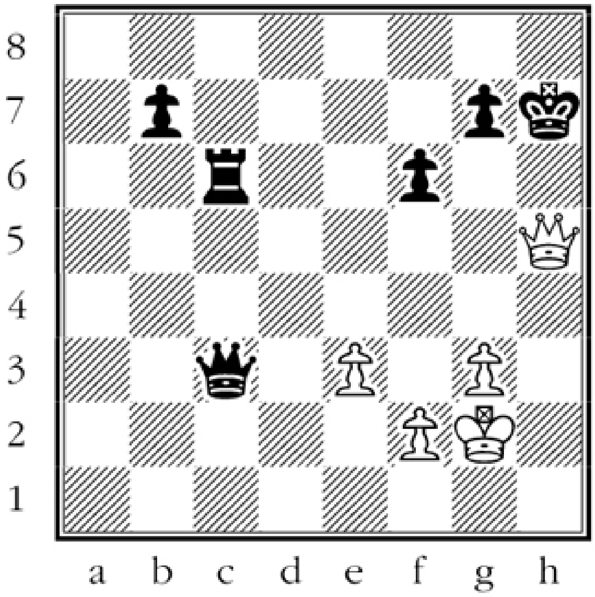
This is the term for an endless series of checks which the opponent cannot avoid. Many a player has escaped from a lost game by giving a perpetual check. Thus, in Diagram 53 White, who is so far behind in material that he would lose under normal circumstances, can ward off defeat by resorting to a perpetual check. (D)



53

White plays for perpetual check:

1.Qe8+! Kh7 2.Qh5+ (D)



54

Black’s king cannot escape from the checks:

2…Kg8 3.Qe8+ Kh7 4.Qh5+, etc.

In Diagram 54 it is clear that Black’s king is limited to seesawing between two squares with no support from the other black pieces. Under the circumstances

White’s queen can maintain the checks indefinitely – any other course would lose for him. So the game is abandoned as a draw.

Stalemate

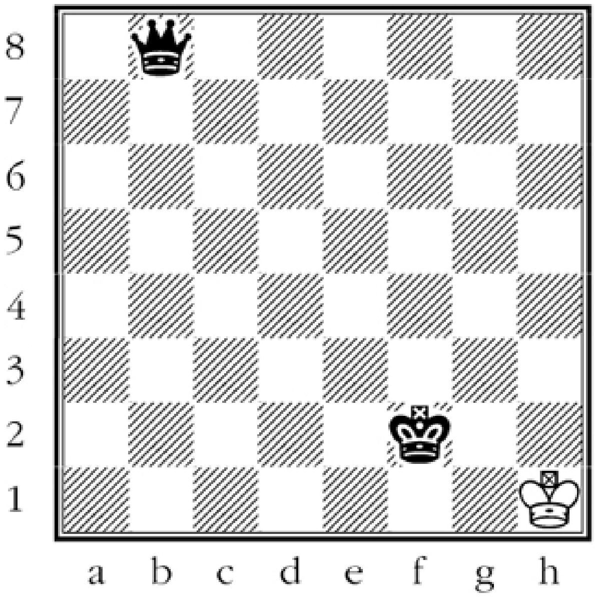
In the description of *checkmate*, it was stated that a player is checkmated when his king is in check (under attack) and when there is no possibility of getting the king out of check.

In the case of *stalemate*, the following conditions have to be present: (1) It is a player’s turn to move

(2) His king is *not* in check

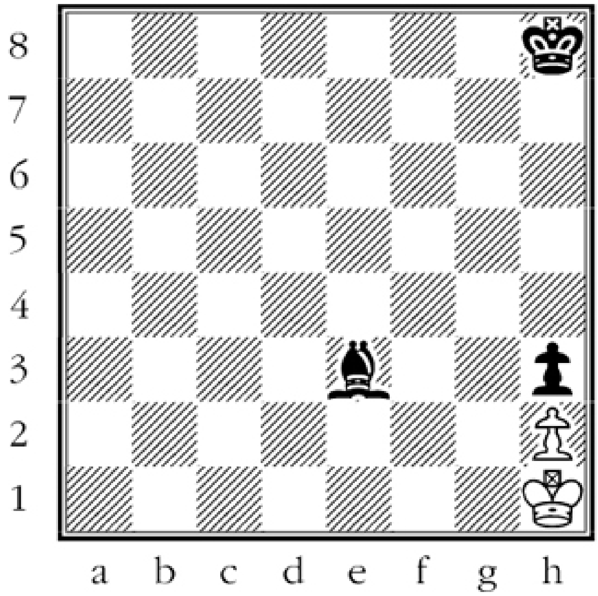
(3) The only moves he can make would place his king within the attacking range of an enemy unit.

This is stalemate, and the game is a draw. Diagrams 55 and 56 are cases in point. (D)



55

White (to move) is stalemated



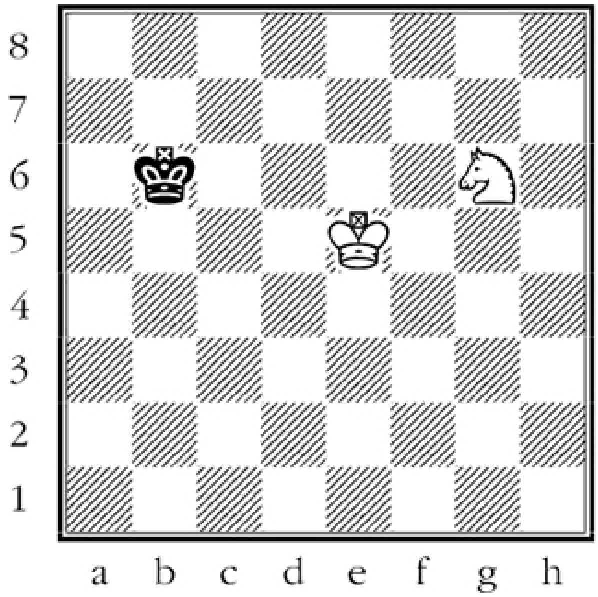
56

White (to move) is stalemated

In both cases it is White’s turn to move. In both cases his king is *not* in check. In both cases he is limited to moves that would place his king within the range of an enemy unit.

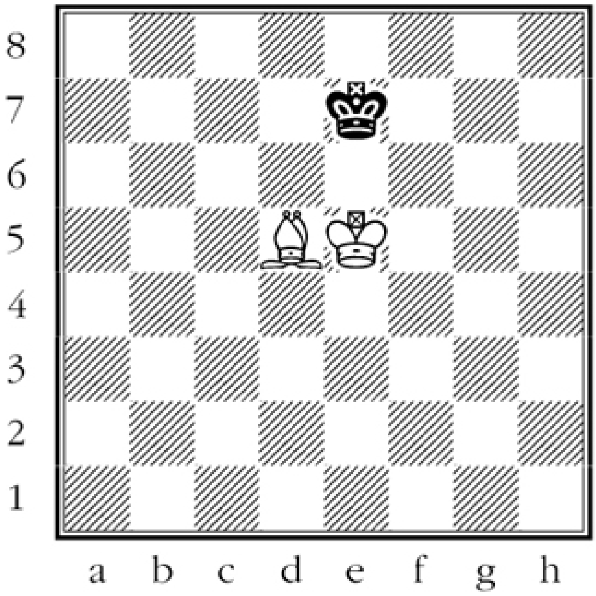
Inadequate Checkmating Material

Toward the end of a game a player may be left with a material advantage which is not great enough to force checkmate. As it is impossible to checkmate with a knight or with a bishop, the positions in Diagrams 57 and 58 are drawn. (D)



57

Drawn position



58

Drawn position

Other Drawing Methods

A game can be called a draw by mutual agreement. If 50 moves have been made on each side without a capture or a pawn move, either player can claim a draw.

If a player whose turn it is to play is about to make a move that will bring about the same position for the third time [with the same player on move and the same potential, such as castling or *en passant* – Ed.], he can claim a draw.

Book Two

The Nine Bad Moves

Number One

Neglecting Development of Your Pieces

In the original starting position of a game of chess, the pieces are not ready for action. The process by which we advance them to squares on which they can attack and defend and maneuver freely is called “development.”

If we develop the pieces slowly or ineffectively, their action is limited. Their attacking ability is slight, and the initiative passes into the hands of our opponent.

If we move one piece repeatedly, it follows that other pieces are being neglected, still left on their original squares where they accomplish nothing. Lagging or ineffective development accounts for many a stinging defeat on the chessboard.

While each opening presents its special problems, there are some practical rules that are helpful guides. Always start by playing out a center pawn, as this creates a line for developing a bishop. Bring out the king knight very early – preferably to f3 (f6). By playing out the king knight and king bishop quickly, you make early castling possible and thus get your king out of any immediate danger.

Try to avoid placing your bishops on diagonals where they are blocked by your own pawns. Avoid, too, an excessive number of pawn moves – they contribute little or nothing to development.

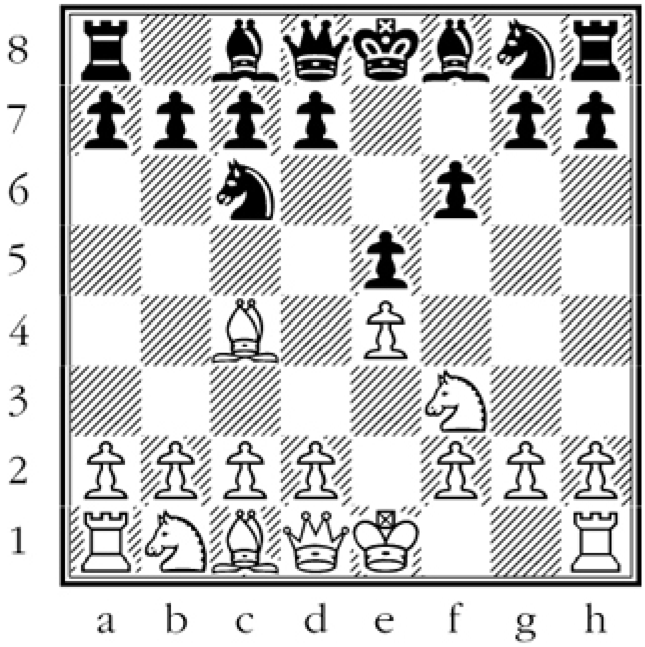
Play over your games to see whether you are achieving the following minimum in the first ten moves: both center pawns advanced; both knights developed; both bishops developed; castling completed. This is an ideal goal which you may not always achieve, but it will help you to guard against moving the same piece repeatedly.

Managing the queen is a different matter. If you develop her too soon you will only expose her to harrying by enemy pieces of lesser value. A later chapter will treat this point in detail.

Disastrous Pawn Moves

King's Knight's Opening

White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 f6?? (D)



Black's third move should have been 3…Bc5 or 3…Nf6 – useful developing moves that prepare castling.

Instead, the actual move played, 3…f6??, is damaging in a number of ways. It is basically bad because it opens up a line of attack on the black king. (The further play will illustrate the dangers involved.) Secondly, 3…f6?? has the great defect of making it very difficult for Black to castle. The pawn move extends the diagonal of White's bishop on c4 so that the bishop controls g8 – the square the black king would occupy in castling. There might be some point to 3…f6?? if the move had good qualities to set off its defects. But it not only has no advantageous features – it even has a fourth defect! – it deprives the g8-knight of its best square at f6.

4.Nh4

White wants to exploit 3…f6?? by playing Qh5+.

4…g5???

Suicide. Now White's queen check will lead to checkmate.

5.Qh5+ Ke7 6.Nf5#

Of the five moves that Black made, three were pawn moves and one a king move. Aside from contributing nothing to the development of his pieces, the pawn moves were definitely harmful in opening the gates to the enemy.

Poor Development, Poor Defense

Ruy Lopez

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 Nxe4 5.d4 Nd6 6.Bxc6 bxc6 7.dxe5 Nb7

Out of his first seven moves, Black moves the knight four times and winds up on a bad square toward the side of the board. Even with best play from now on, Black will have to make at least one more move with the knight to get him into active play.

As the game goes, the knight never gets into play.

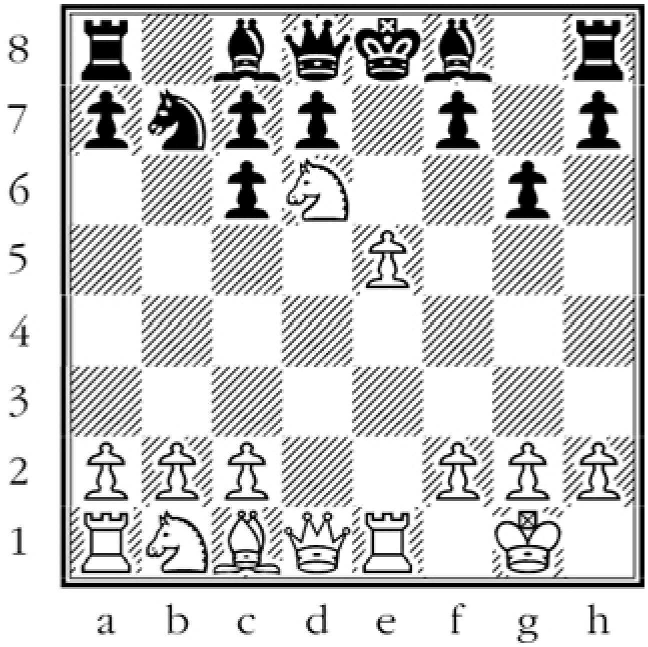
8.Nd4 Be7 9.Nf5 Bf8

More loss of time. The bishop makes two moves and lands on his original square. All that Black has to show for nine moves is a knight on the wretched square b7. Such faulty "development" must lead to disaster.

10.Re1 g6

Black’s anxiety to be rid of the encroaching knight is understandable. He succeeds in driving off the knight, but his success is a very costly one. In any event, it no longer seems possible for Black to make up for previous lost time.

11.Nd6+! (D)



11…Bxd6

On 11…cxd6 12.exd6+ Be7 13.Rxe7+ winning easily. And if 11…Ke7 12.Bg5+ leading to a quick mate (12…Ke6 13.Qg4+, etc.).

12.exd6+ Kf8 13.Bh6+ Kg8 14.Qd4

Threatens mate.

14…f6 15.Qc4#!

Black’s lack of development plagues him to the very end. Bad development plus king in the center – a fatal combination of weaknesses.

White Neglects his King’s Welfare

King’s Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.f4 Bc5 4.Nf3 d6

White should now continue developing his pieces by playing 5.Bc4.

5.f5?

Not good. He wastes time by moving the pawn again.

5…Nf6

Note how Black keeps developing his pieces.

6.h3?

Another time-killer.

6…d5!

True, Black loses time by moving the d-pawn a second time, but he is opening up the game to his advantage.

7.Nxe5?

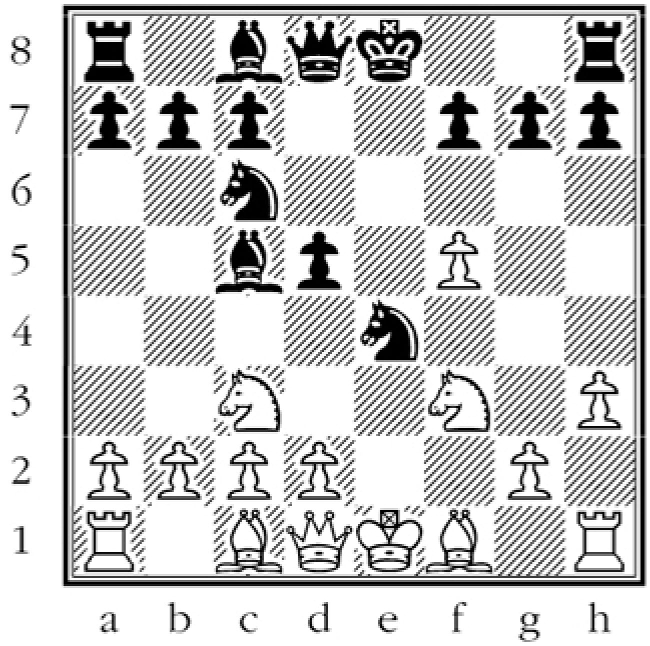
White expects 7…Nxe5 – which he will answer with 8.d4, winning back the piece. But Black has other plans.

7…Nxe4!

Threatening immediate destruction with …Qh4+. White's king, stranded in the center, is exposed to a devastating attack. In fact, even at this early stage, White is lost. The game is opened up, his king is subject to assault by four black pieces, and his lagging development leaves him without the means to fight back.

8.Nf3 (D)

A shamefaced retreat: he wants to prevent …Qh4+.



8…Qh4+!!!

Black gives short shrift to the unfortunate white king stranded in the center.

9.Nxh4 Bf2+ 10.Ke2 Nd4+

Black sacrificed his queen to make this move possible.

11.Kd3 Nc5#!

The brilliant attack has extracted a brutal penalty for White’s foolish policy of neglecting the development of his pieces and the safety of his king.

How to Lose in Nine Moves

Bird’s Opening

White – Black

1.f4 Nf6 2.c4

White’s first two moves are unfortunate. He should begin by moving center pawns (e-pawn and d-pawn), which would create lines of development for his bishops and gain control of important squares in the center.

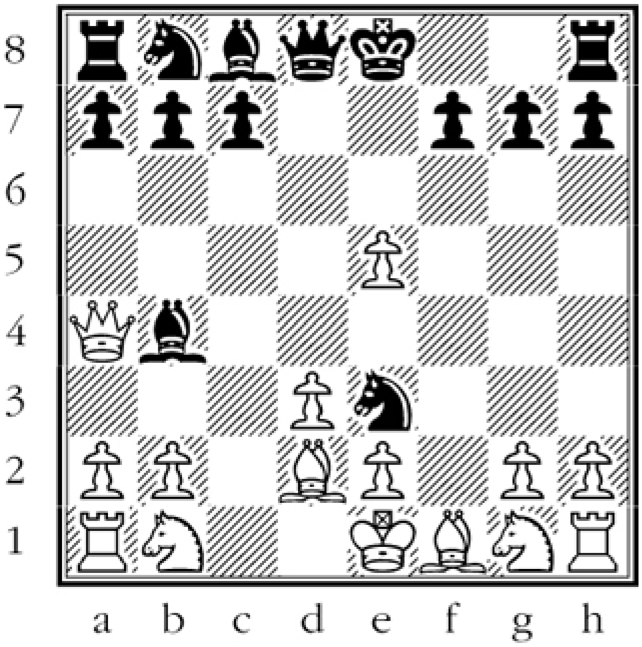
2…d5 3.cxd5 Nxd5 4.d3 e5

Black sacrifices a pawn to seize the initiative.

5.fxe5 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Ne3

The attack on White’s queen cannot be met by 7.Bxe3, as White’s bishop at d2 is pinned. White’s only chance now is 7.Qc1.

7.Qa4+?? (D)



After this plausible (?) move White's queen is lost! – a clear indication that he has botched his development.

7…b5!!

This is the move that traps the queen. White belatedly realizes he cannot play 8.Qxb4, for the reply 8…Nc2+ forks king and queen.

8.Qxb5+ Bd7 9.Qb7 Bc6 White resigns.

White's queen is still trapped: again, if 10.Qxb4 Nc2+!.

The pitiable situation in which White finds himself underlines the serious mistakes he made in neglecting his development.

The chief moral for you to derive from the game is that playing out the center pawns at an early stage gives you your best chance of achieving a quick, normal development. Neglecting the center pawns may create lasting difficulties in getting your pieces out and in finding a safe refuge for your king. And, of course, your chances of successful attack or defense are ruined by poor development. Your pieces cannot function effectively if they are badly developed, or undeveloped.

Thoughtless Development Proves Disastrous

Ruy Lopez

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 b5 5.Bb3 Na5?

This move does not lose material, for if 6.Nxe5 Nxb3 7.axb3 Qg5 and Black recovers his pawn. But Black moves the knight *three times* and then exchanges it for White's bishop. Naturally Black's development suffers sadly.

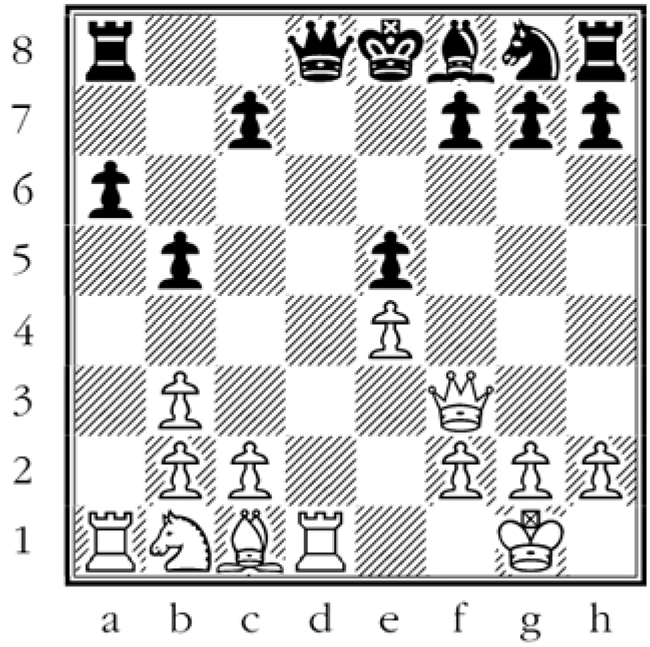
6.0-0 Nxb3 7.axb3 d6 8.d4 Bg4

Previously Black neglected his development; here he makes a thoughtless developing move. As you will see next move, Black must exchange …Bxf3 thus speeding up White's development.

9.dxe5

Now if 9…dxe5 10.Qxd8+ Rxd8 and 11.Nxe5 winning a pawn for White. This forces Black's reply.

9…Bxf3 10.Qxf3 dxe5 11.Rd1 (D)



Let's take stock. As a result of Black's unsatisfactory development, he has parted with the two pieces he developed – his queen knight and queen bishop. White meanwhile has castled, placed both rooks on open files and developed his queen aggressively. All Black's forces are still on the back rank, his king helplessly exposed.

11…Qf6

11…Bd6 is his best chance to catch up in development.

12.Qd3 Qc6

If 12…Bd6 White has a brilliant reply in 13.Rxa6! Rxa6 14.Qxb5+ winning the black rook.

13.Rxa6!! Black resigns.

A pretty conclusion. If 13…Rxa6 14.Qd8# If 13…Qxa6 14.Qd7#. White made admirable use of the open lines that Black presented to him.

Good Development Trounces Poor Development

Scotch Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Bc4 Bc5 5.0-0 d6 6.c3 Bg4

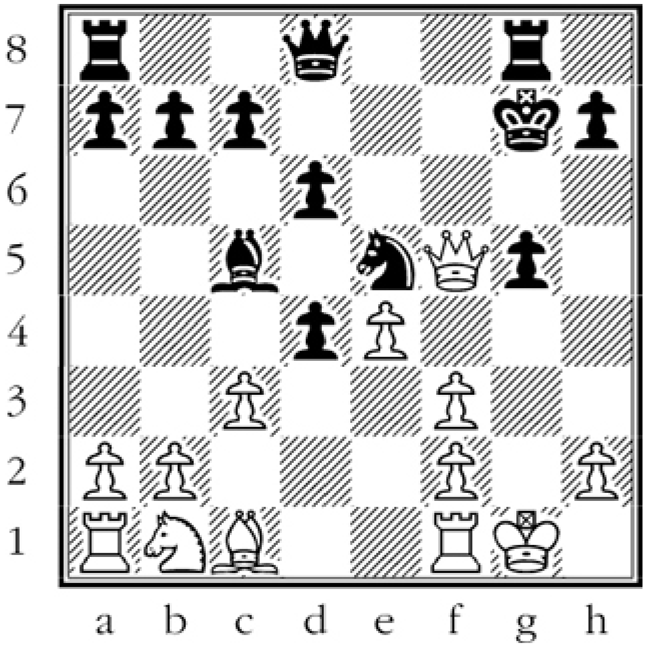
So far both players have consistently devoted themselves to good development.

7.Qb3 Bxf3 8.Bxf7+ Kf8 9.Bxg8 Rxg8 10.gxf3 g5!

Black’s king has lost the castling privilege, but he is in no danger. The foregoing exchanges have left White with only one piece developed – his queen.

On the other hand, White’s kingside is broken up, and this is a source of danger. Another difficulty, as far as White is concerned, is that all three queenside pieces are still roosting on their home squares.

11.Qe6 Ne5! 12.Qf5+ Kg7! (D)



Black does not fear 13.Bxg5, for after 13…Kh8! the bishop is pinned and lost (14.h4 h6 etc.).

Incidentally, the seemingly exposed position of the black king is deceptive. Since White is playing a one-piece attack, Black's king has nothing to fear and will be tucked away safely in the corner. Actually it is the white king, menaced by several black pieces, that is in danger.

13.Kh1 Kh8 14.Rg1 g4! 15.f4 Nf3 16.Rxg4 Qh4!!

This brilliant move threatens …Qxh2#. White is lost.

17.Rg2 Qxh2+! 18.Rxh2 Rg1#!

Very pretty play, made possible by the efficient cooperation of Black's aggressively developed pieces. Note that White's queenside pieces are still on their original squares.

How Exchanges May Influence Development

King's Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 g5

This pawn advance often weakens Black's kingside formation.

4.h4 g4 5.Ne5 Nf6 6.Nxg4 Nxe4 7.Qe2 d5 8.d3

Threatening to win the pinned knight and thereby forcing Black's reply. The exchange that follows is the first of a series of exchanges that greatly increase White's lead in development. Although Black does not commit any clear error, he finds that his arrears in development keep increasing all the time.

8…Bxg4 9.Qxg4 Ng3 10.Rh3 Bd6 11.Bxf4 Qe7+ 12.Kf2 Bxf4 13.Qxf4 Nxf1

An instructive moment: the knight, which has made four moves, is exchanged for White's bishop, which is still on its original square. This involves a colossal loss of time for Black.

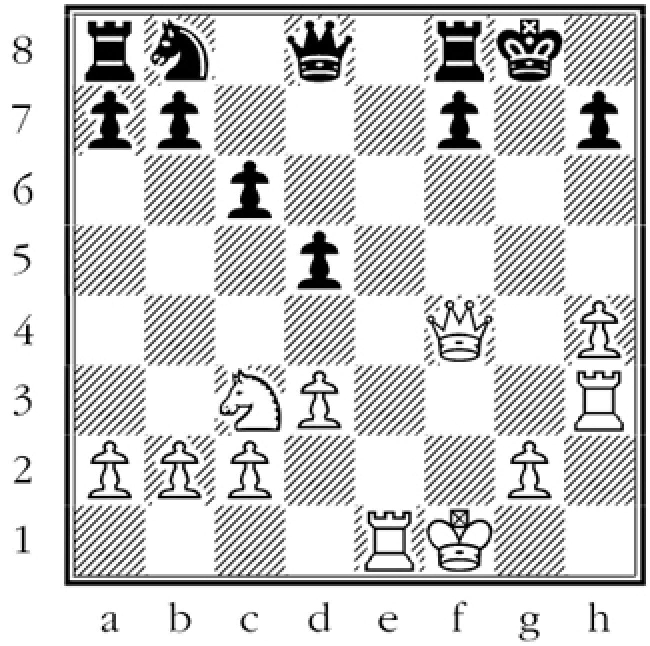
14.Nc3

As Black's knight cannot escape, White keeps hammering away at development.

14…0-0

Naturally he cannot allow his queen to be pinned by 15.Re1. However, castling is anything but safe, in view of the gap left in the castled position by the disappearance of Black's g-pawn.

15.Kxf1 c6 16.Re1 Qd8 (D)



The upshot of the exchanges is that White has all his pieces out, while Black's forces are all on the back row. Add to this the exposed position of Black's king, and you have the elements of a brilliant finish.

17.Rg3+ Kh8 18.Qh6

Threatens 19.Qg7#.

18…Rg8 19.Re8!!

Beautiful play. Naturally Black cannot play 19…Rxe8 while 19…Qxe8 also allows mate.

19…Qxe8 20.Qf6+ Rg7 21.Qxg7#

White clearly owed his victory to his overwhelming lead in development. Had Black developed his queen knight, that would have been enough to make the winning combination impossible!

Number Two

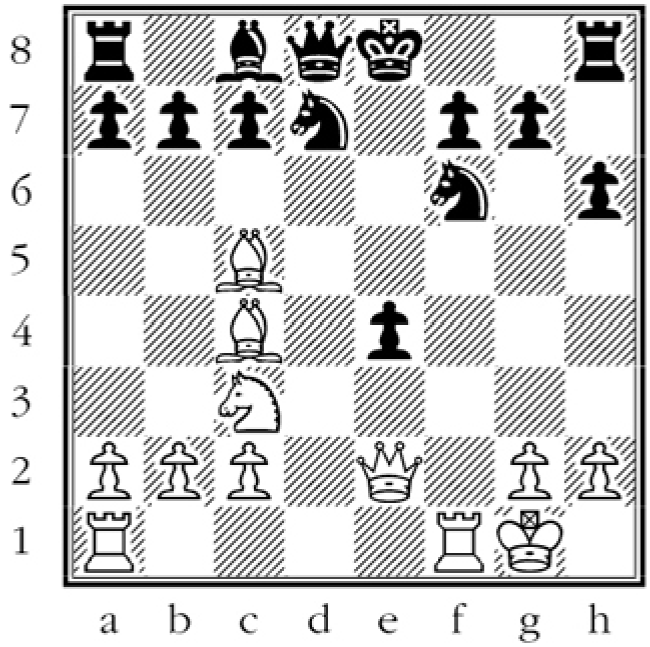
Exposing your King to Attack

The king is unlike any other piece. In every game of chess, the object, direct or potential, is to checkmate your opponent's king. No matter how the game proceeds, no matter what your plans may be, you must guard your king and look for opportunities to menace your opponent's king.

Since the king's safety controls the fate of the game, you take unnecessary risks whenever you expose your king to attack. One of the most common ways to endanger the king is to leave him on his original square in the middle of the back rank. The other chess pieces are most active in the center and exert their greatest power in that area. Consequently, the king is most vulnerable at his original square.

Leaving the king in the center is particularly dangerous in "open" positions – those in which there are open files. Such open lines are highways along which the queen and rooks can operate to menace the hostile king. (In "closed" positions – those in which the pawn position is locked – a king *may* be fairly safe in the center.

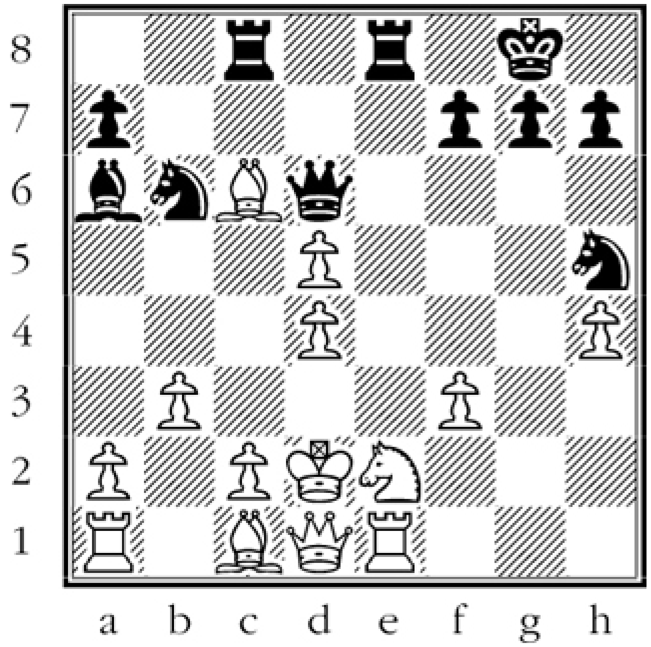
Leaving the king in the center sometimes leads to ferocious "king-hunts." In the course of such a savage drive on a hostile king, he may be hounded all the way from his original square to the other side of the board. The king-hunt is the extreme example of the helplessness of a king stranded in the center and exposed to the fury of the hostile pieces. (D)



White to move

Here is a good example of the dangers confronting a king in the center in an open position. After 1.Qxe4+!! Black resigns, for if 1…Nxe4 2.Bxf7#.

Knowing that it is bad policy to leave the king exposed to attack in the center, how are we to avoid such dangers? The safest course is to castle fairly early in the game – say no later than the tenth move. Once the king is castled on one side or the other, he is much less vulnerable than in the center. (D)



Black to move

Though White is three pawns up, his position is disorganized, his development chaotic, his king endangered in the center. It is interesting to see how Black drives the white king to his doom by a series of smashing moves. White is in no position to resist as his king steadily gives ground.

To break up White’s position, Black must remove the bishop at c6 and the knight at e2.

1…Rxc6! 2.dxc6 Bxe2 3.Rxe2

Mission accomplished. Now Black can begin the king hunt.

3…Qxd4+ 4.Ke1 Qg1+ 5.Kd2 Rd8+ 6.Kc3

Now 6…Qxd1 would win easily. However, the combination Black chooses shows that he has a sense of humor.

6…Qc5+ 7.Kb2 Na4+! White resigns.

The amusing alternative is 8.Kb1 Nc3+ 9.Kb2 Nxd1+ 10.Kb1 Nc3+ 11.Kb2 followed by 11…Nxe2.

Black Provokes a King-Hunt

Evans Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Ba5 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0 Nf6 8.Ba3

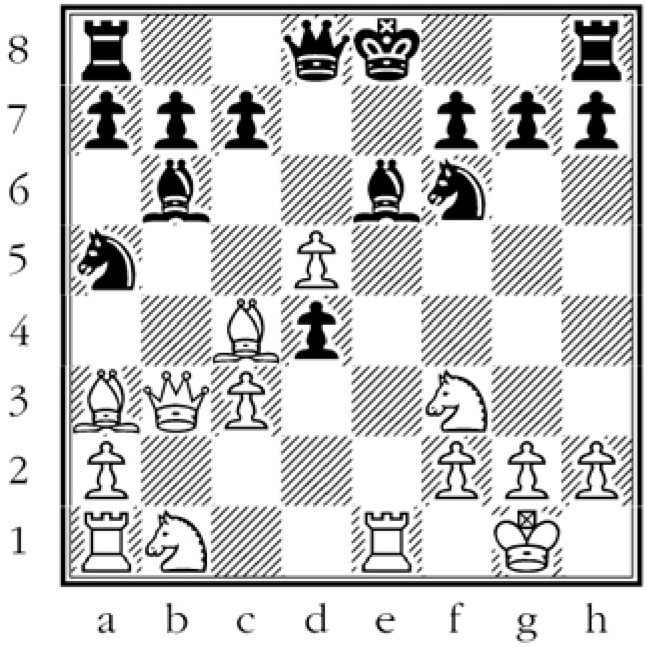
White sacrifices a pawn in this opening to gain time and open up lines for attack.

8…Bb6

Four of Black’s moves have been made with this bishop. Such loss of time is bound to lead to disaster.

9.Qb3 d5 10.exd5 Na5 11.Re1+ Be6 (D)

11…Kd7 is refuted by 12.Bb5+ c6 13.dxc6+ and 14.Qxf7+.



White can now win a piece with 12.Qa4+. Instead, he decides to sacrifice his queen to bring about a murderous king-hunt.

12.dxe6!! Nxb3 13.exf7+ Kd7 14.Be6+ Kc6

Black’s king gets no support from the other black pieces.

15.Ne5+ Kb5 16.Bc4+ Ka5 17.Bb4+ Ka4 18.axb3#

The king has met a gruesome fate deep in enemy territory.

White Neglects Castling

Giuoco Piano

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Bb6 5.d4 Qe7 6.d5

A questionable move; it closes the diagonal of White's bishop at c4 and opens the diagonal of Black's bishop at b6.

6…Nd8

This is a good point for White to castle his king into safety.

7.Be2?

Incomprehensible. Not only does White neglect to castle; he loses time by moving the already developed bishop.

7…d6 8.h3?

Again neglecting castling and again wasting time; besides, the pawn's move may turn out to have a weakening effect on White's position.

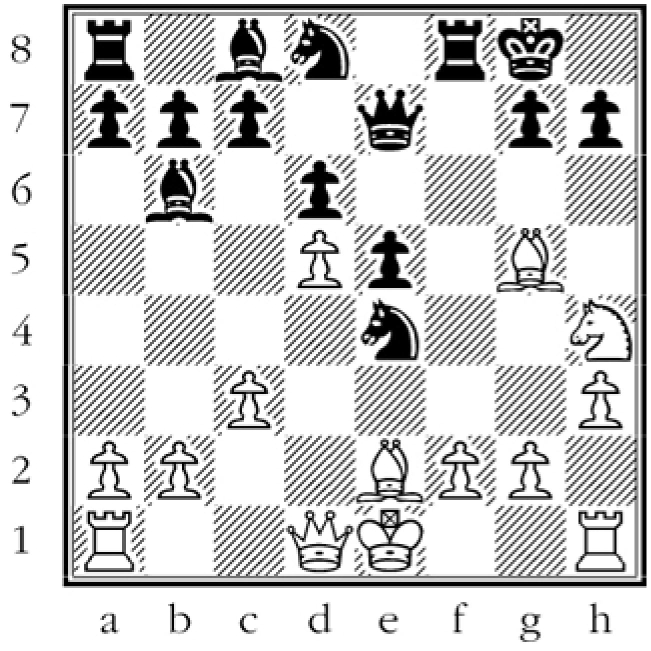
8…f5 9.Bg5 Nf6 10.Nbd2 0-0 11.Nh4?

Once more he misses castling, and once more he fritters away precious time by moving an already developed piece.

11…fxe4 12.Nxe4

Calmly relying on the pin on Black's king knight. But White's numerous violations of chess theory allow Black to violate chess theory too! Black now sacrifices his queen for a piece of considerably lesser value.

12…Nxe4!! (D)

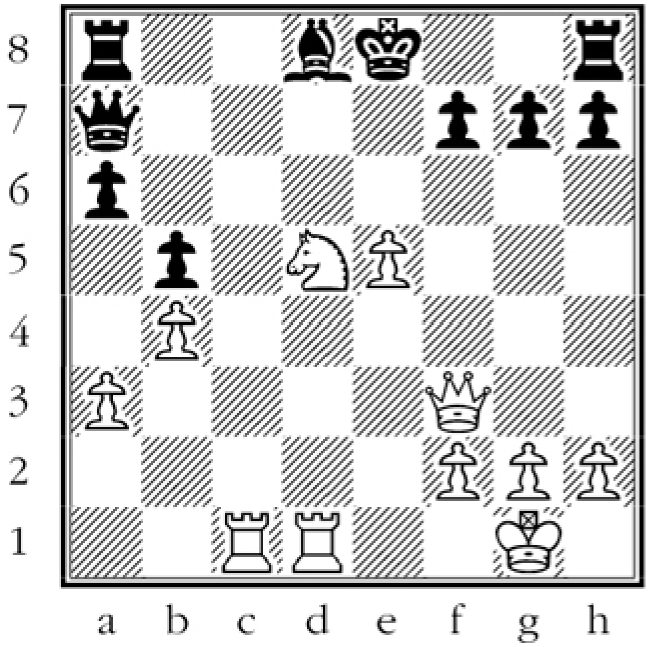


13.Bxe7 Bxf2+ 14.Kf1 Ng3#

What are the technical factors that made this mate possible? Firstly, 7.Be2? deprived the king of a possible flight square. Secondly, 8.h3?

weakened the kingside (allowing the eventual …Ng3#). Finally, 11.Nh4? resulted in the complete opening of the f-file.

Thus we see that Black’s brilliancy was grounded in the shortcomings of White’s faulty play. Yet the crowning mistake was White’s *failure to castle*. (D)



White to move

Black’s king is in the center and, what is even worse, he lags considerably in development. The position of Black’s king is an invitation to attack. The aggressive disposition of White’s forces gives him the means of sacrificing successfully.

The lack of communication among Black’s forces is likely to be disastrous for him. Reckoning on this favorable factor, White plays: **1.Nc7+!**

This leaves Black no choice. If he refuses to capture the knight, he loses a whole rook. But why shouldn’t he capture the knight?

1…Bxc7 2.Rxc7

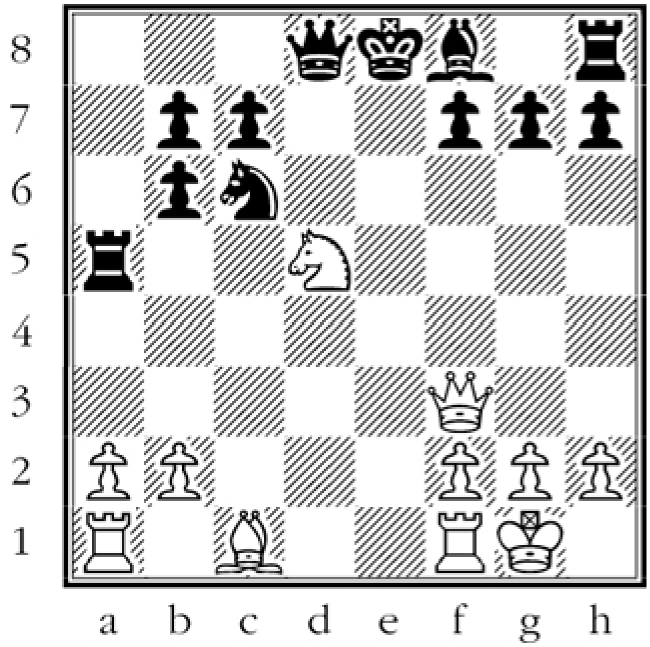
This is why! White menaces the black queen and also threatens 3.Qxf7#.

2…Qxc7 3.Qxa8+ Ke7

Forced, but now he loses the other rook, leaving him with a hopeless disadvantage in material.

4.Qxh8 Black resigns.

It was *the vulnerable position of Black's king in the center* that made White's brilliant combination possible. Had Black's king been castled, White's position would still have been vastly superior; but no immediate win would have been in sight. (D) The position of Black's king is ominous. Both center files are open, but Black is not yet ready to castle. In all such cases the attacker must proceed incisively. If he fails to press his advantage energetically, he will give the hostile king time to escape. Thus time is of the essence.



White to move

1.Re1+

Black's vulnerable king must submit to a disagreeable pin. If 1…Ne7 2.Nc3, and White has lasting pressure on the e-file, as Black's castling is postponed indefinitely.

1…Be7

Hoping to gain time to castle. Everything hinges on the question of *time*.

2.Nxe7

The simplest way to dispose of his menaced knight.

2…Nxe7 3.Bg5!!

A surprise stroke which *gains time* to develop his queen rook with decisive effect. If 3…f6 4.Bxf6! gxf6 5.Rad1! Qc8 6.Qxf6 wins at once.

3…Rxg5 4.Rad1! Qc8

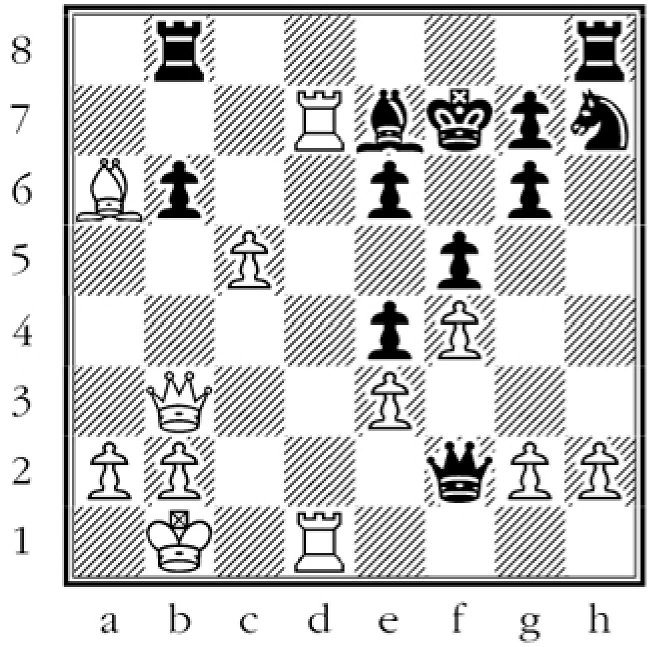
If 4…Rd5 5.Rxd5 and Black cannot retake the rook because of the pin.

5.Qe3! 0-0

He cannot save the rook and stop the mate too.

6.Qxg5 Black resigns.

With the exchange ahead, White wins easily. (D)



White to move

All the elements in this picture are familiar to you by now. Black’s king is in the center and has little cooperation from the black pieces. Particularly bad is the indifferent position of Black’s queen, which is “out of the battle” and offers no support to the menaced king.

White has sacrificed a piece to get this position – a good investment, for the black pieces have left their king to a miserable fate. White’s astounding first move is the key to a fantastic winning process: **1.Qxe6+!!! Kxe6**

He must capture.

2.Bc4+ Kf6

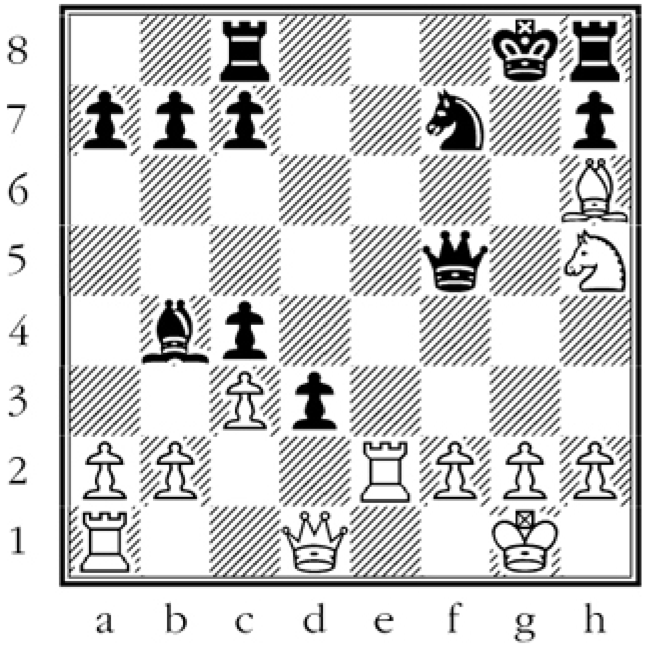
Again Black has no choice. Yet his king is so critically threatened that his enormous material advantage is useless.

3.R1d6+!! Bxd6

And again he has no choice.

4.Rf7#

An extraordinarily impressive finish. White's enormous material disadvantage underlies the tragic split in the placement of the black pieces. Given the *scattered formation* of Black's men, catastrophe was bound to come. (D)



White to move

Black failed to castle and his battered king has been driven from the center. His kingside pawns are gone. One rook is bottled up; the other has little value. Momentarily White has two pieces under attack, but this is of little importance; with 1.Re3 he avoids loss of material.

As you have seen from the discussion of the diagramed position, White can play 1.Re3 with satisfactory results. But the exposed position of Black's king is tantalizing: there ought to be some rapid, sensational, conclusive method of putting an end to the black king's sufferings. And there is!

1.Re8+!!!

To find such a winning line requires imagination of the highest order. But remember this: without the previous weakening of the black king's position, all the imagination in the world would be useless. Perfectly sound positions are safe from sudden, startling demolition.

1…Rxe8 2.Qg4+!!!

White's amazing first move was merely the preparation for the even more amazing queen sacrifice.

2…Qxg4

Now that Black's queen is out of the way, White achieves his objective.

3.Nf6#!

Number Three

Making Too Many Queen Moves in the Opening

Repeated moves with the same piece in the opening are a form of neglected development. While the same piece is moving again and again, the other pieces remain undeveloped. Always a serious fault, it becomes even more serious when the queen is the piece which is being moved repeatedly. There are a number of reasons for this.

The queen is by far the strongest piece on the board. It is the heart and soul of a well-managed attack which is based on systematic, *completed* development. To move this powerful piece aimlessly and repeatedly dissipates the attacking power of your position. To move the queen very early while concentrating on a definite but minor goal is still bad policy; often much more important features are neglected during these short-sighted maneuvers.

Still another drawback to early queen moves is that they readily expose the queen to attack by enemy pieces. So we have here the painful paradox that while one player ignores his development with repeated queen moves, his opponent develops one piece after another with gain of time by simultaneously attacking the queen!

Your best course, then, is to follow the advice given in *Number One*: concentrate on playing out the minor pieces at the beginning of the game; make sure of castling into safety; and develop the queen only after the opening development has begun to take shape.

Four Consecutive Queen Moves – and "Resigns"

Caro-Kann Defense

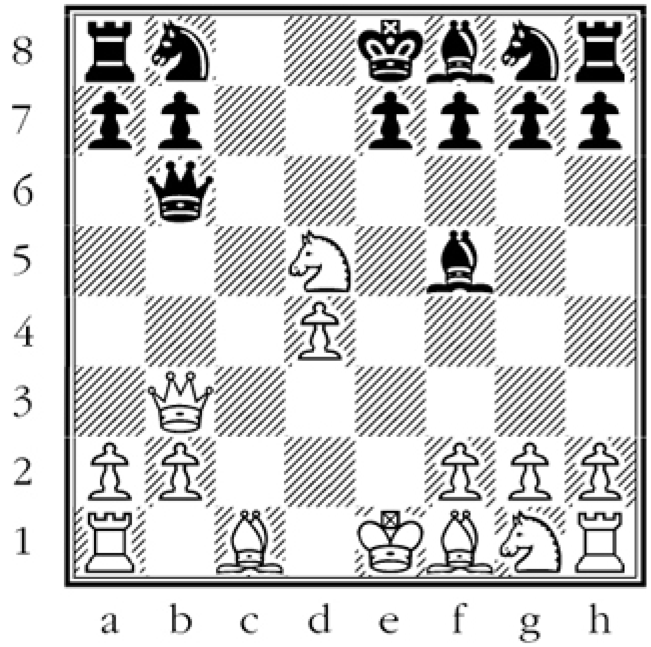
White – Black

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Bf5

It is poor policy to expose his queen to immediate attack.

5.cxd5 Qxd5 6.Nc3 Qa5 7.Qb3 Qb6

Still another queen move **8.Nd5!** (D)



If Black now tries to defend the b-pawn with 8…Qc6, then the pinning move 9.Bb5 wins the queen.

8…Qxb3 9.axb3 Black resigns!

Black cannot meet the double threat of 10.Nb6 or 10.Nc7+, winning the exchange. If he tries 9…Na6 then 10.Rxa6! bxa6 11.Nc7+ wins for White.

The excessive number of queen moves has resulted in an undeveloped position lacking adequate defensive resources.

Black Loses Precious Time

King’s Knight’s Opening

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Qf6?

A thoughtless move. Why use the queen – the most powerful piece on the board – for such menial work as guarding a pawn? (2…Nc6 performs the same task much more economically).

3.Bc4 Qg6?

A second move with the unfortunate queen.

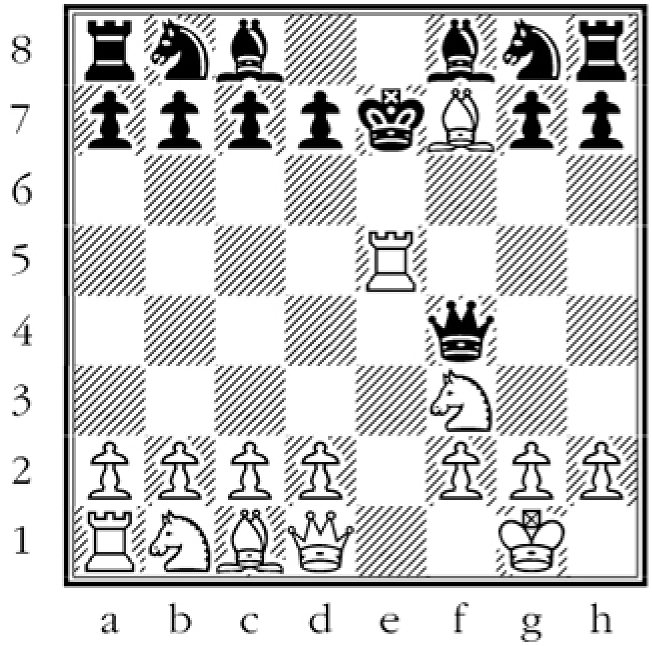
4.0-0! Qxe4??

And now a third move with the unfortunate queen. Far ahead in development, White is now ready to exploit the queen’s exposed position.

5.Bxf7+! Ke7

For if 5…Kxf7 6.Ng5+ forking king and queen. 5…Kd8 is slightly better, but the damage is done: Black’s king is stranded in the center and has lost the castling privilege.

6.Re1! Qf4 7.Rxe5+! (D)



With a mating attack in the offing, White does not mind sacrificing his bishop.

7…Kxf7 8.d4!

Gaining valuable time by again attacking the unfortunate queen.

8…Qf6 9.Ng5+ Kg6 10.Qd3+ Kh5 11.g4+! Kxg4 12.Qh3#

An extraordinary game: out of 11 moves, Black made five with his queen, five with his king. Small wonder that his king was battered into an early checkmate.

White’s Wandering Queen is Trapped

Budapest Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.Nf3 Bc5 5.e3 Nc6 6.Bd2 Ngxe5

Thus Black wins back the pawn offered on his second move.

7.Nxe5 Nxe5 8.Bc3 Qe7 9.Qd5?

A premature attack with the queen. This is bound to be a waste of time, for Black need only protect his knight and then drive the queen away.

9…d6 10.b4

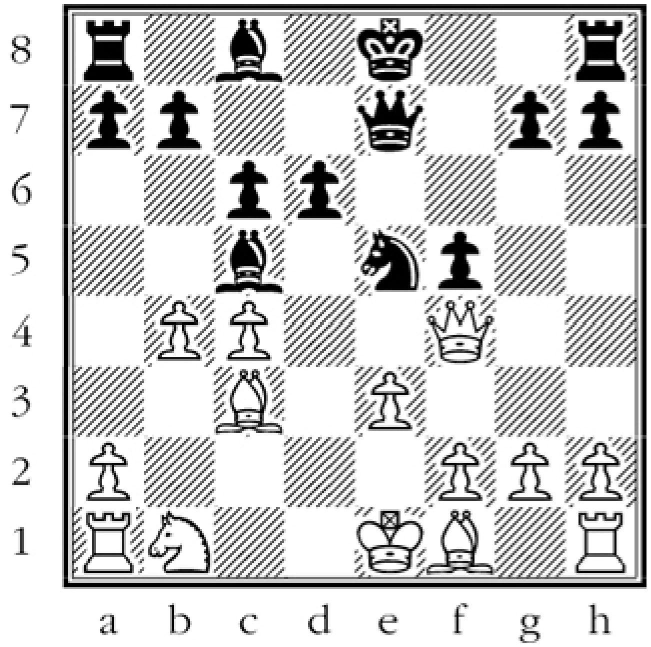
Pointless. It would be better to develop with 10.Be2.

10…c6 11.Qe4

White is looking for trouble. His simplest course is 11.Qd2, taking the queen out of danger.

11…f5

Even at this point, after two time-wasting queen moves, White can still save himself with 12.Qc2. Instead, he imagines that he is keeping the queen “in active play” with: **12.Qf4???** (D)



But this is one “aggressive” queen move too many. The white queen is now lost by force!

12…g5!! 13.Qg3

The queen has no other move.

13…f4!! 14.exf4 gxf4 15.Qxf4

Still the only move. But now the e-file is open, and White is exposed to a ruinous double check.

15…Nd3++ White resigns.

White must move his king, losing the queen. An impressive example of how early queen moves expose that powerful piece to persecution by the enemy’s minor pieces.

Aimless Queen Moves Prove Disastrous

Falkbeer Counter Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 d5 3.exd5 e4 4.d3 Nf6 5.dxe4 Nxe4 6.g3?

White guards against the threat of 6…Qh4+ 7.g3 Nxg3 8.hxg3 Qxh1. But the *developing* move 6.Nf3 would be a much more effective way of preventing the queen check.

6…Bc5 7.Qe2?

Having the king and queen on the open king file may easily lead to trouble for White.

7…0-0!

Black is piling up a great lead in development. He does not fear 8.Qxe4, for then he wins the white queen with the pinning move 8…Re8.

8.Qc4???

Another queen move, and another serious loss of time in a position which cannot bear the strain.

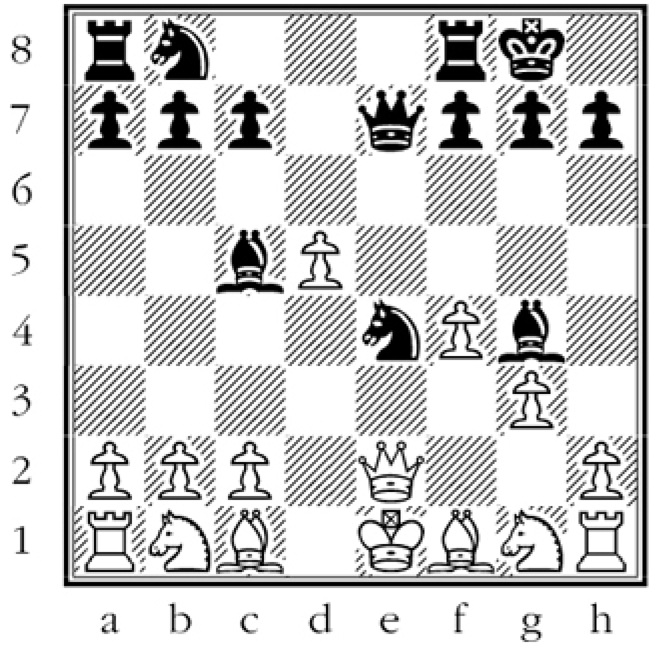
8…Qe7

Putting the open file to good use. He threatens a nasty discovered check with 9…Nxg3+ or 9…Nf2+, winning White's king rook in either event.

9.Qe2

Still another queen move; but he must try to keep the open file at least partly closed.

9…Bg4 (D)



At first sight incomprehensible, this powerful move forces White's queen off the open e-file.

10.Qxg4 Bf2+!

If now 11.Kd1 Nc3+! 12.bxc3 Qe1#!. Or 12.Kd2 Qe3#!.

11.Ke2 Nf6+

This brutal discovered check wins White’s queen – a graphic proof of the dangers lurking on the open e-file for a king stranded in the center.

12.Kxf2 Nxg4+ White resigns.

Black exacted a harsh penalty for White’s repeated queen moves.

White’s Combination is Unsound

Queen’s Pawn Opening

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d5 3.cxd5 Qxd5 4.Nc3 Qd8

Black has lost time with the queen moves.

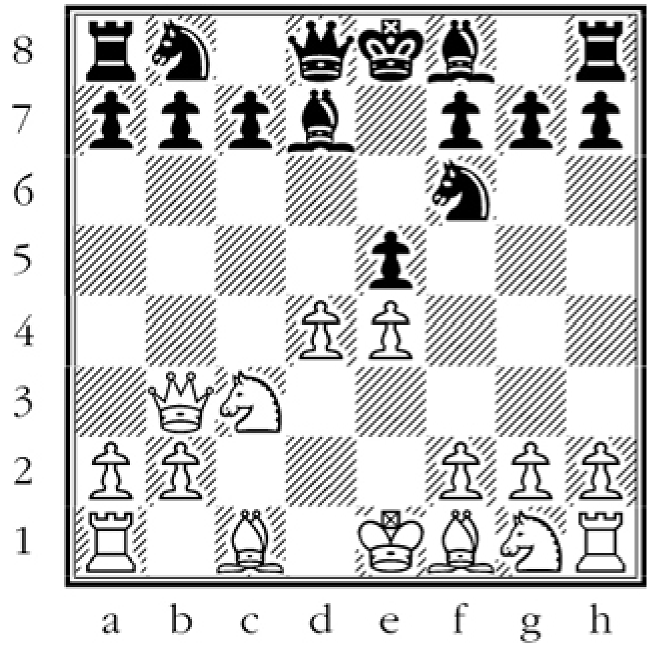
5.e4 e5

A temporary pawn offer: if now 6.dxe5 Qxd1+ 7.Kxd1 Ng4 and Black regains the pawn favorably. White’s indicated reply is the developing move 6.Nf3. Instead, he plays a superfluous queen move that leads to trouble.

6.Qa4+?? Bd7

A typical example of the way in which early development of the queen exposes that piece to attack by hostile forces of lesser value.

7.Qb3 (D)



Here is White’s idea: if he retreats 7.Qd1, there follows 7…exd4 8.Qxd4 Nc6 and White must lose still more time with still another queen move. Naturally White does not relish this loss of time. Therefore, he intends to part with his d-pawn, winning Black’s b-pawn in return. Black will win White’s queen knight, but only by losing his own queen rook in return.

Thus White reasons, and it sounds very plausible. What he forgets is that he will be making three consecutive queen moves, ending up with his queen hopelessly out of play and his other pieces undeveloped.

7…exd4 8.Qxb7 dxc3

If 8…Bc6 White saves himself with the pinning 9.Bb5!.

9.Qxa8

Now White’s queen is far from the scene of action, and Black has a free hand in attacking the helpless white king in the center.

9…cxb2 10.Bxb2 Bb4+ 11.Ke2 Bg4+ 12.f3

White fares no better with 12.Ke3 for Black still has 12…Qd2# or 12…Bd2#.

12…Qd2#

A convincing sermon on the subject of making too many queen moves in the opening. If we compare the sequence of moves 6-9 with the sequence of moves 10-12, we see that a series of excessive queen moves may often lead to disaster. The queen is too powerful a piece to be wasted on trifling excursions.

White Wins Two Rooks – and Loses the Game

Philidor’s Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 Nf6 4.dxe5 Nxe4 5.Bc4 Be6 6.Bxe6 fxe6 7.Qe2

White develops the queen this early because he is carried away by the double threat of 8.Qxe4 and 8.Qb5+, which will win a pawn.

7…d5 8.Qb5+ Nc6

Now White can win a pawn, but the price is too steep: 9.Qxb7?? Nb4 10.Qb5+ c6 11.Qa4 Nc5!! and White’s queen is lost (12.Qa3 Nxc2+ or 12.Qxb4 Nd3+).

9.Nd4

Still threatening to win a pawn, but he is neglecting his development.

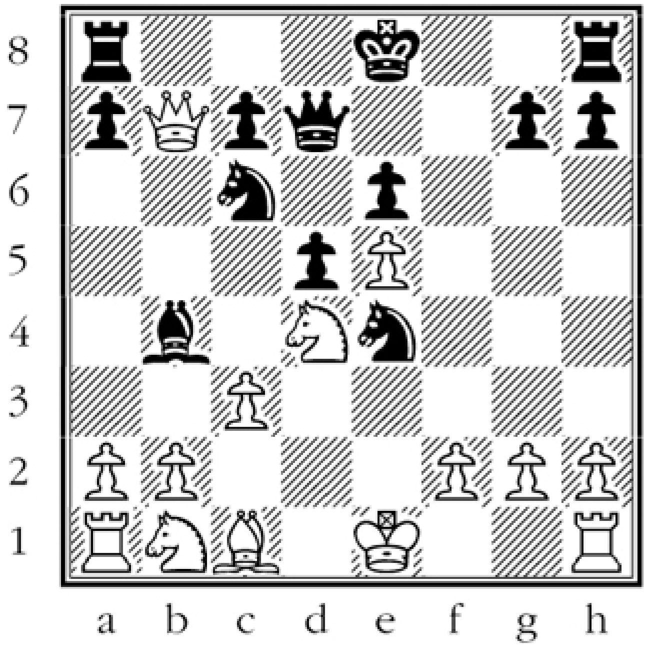
9…Qd7!

Defending with a developing move – and at the same time preparing an extraordinarily deep replay to White’s coming pawn grab.

10.Qxb7

Still another queen move – but it does not seem to lose any time because of the attack on Black’s queen rook.

10…Bb4+!! 11.c3 (D)



Now three black pieces are attacked. Are White’s repeated queen moves justified after all?

11…Nxd4!! 12.Qxa8+ Kf7 13.Qxh8

White’s queen moves have been very profitable, but…

13…Qb5!! White resigns.

There is no way for White to prevent …Qe2#. The position has a beautiful logic all its own: White’s queen is far, far away from the scene of action; all the other white pieces are on there original squares. Too many queen moves!

Number Four

Grabbing Pawns Thoughtlessly

Advantage in material is the deciding factor in most games of chess. Consequently, you must always be on the lookout to capture material without yielding up the same amount of material to your opponent.

But the opportunity to capture material is not always a blessing. The capture may have serious drawbacks attached to it. Sometimes an innocent-looking pawn may turn out to be protected indirectly, and capturing the pawn may involve you in heavy losses. So the first caution about capturing is to examine the position for any trace of hidden protection.

Even where no such protection is available, the capture may be unfavorable in other ways. Perhaps your king is in need of defense, and a slyly offered pawn will lure your queen far away from the defense. You may find that you are capturing a pawn which is trifling in comparison to the harm caused by leaving your king defenseless.

Such faraway captures by the queen remind us of the dangers to which that powerful piece is exposed in making repeated moves early in the game. To play the queen out early, have her capture a distant pawn or two, expose her to attack by hostile pieces, and then spend more time in getting her back in active play – this big mistake has lost many a game. In the worst of these cases, you may find that a far-ranging capture of a remote pawn will actually result in your queen being trapped – lost for a hostile piece of far less value.

In your own games, then, you will avoid pawn-grabbing moves that either neglect development in the opening stage or spoil vitally important defensive formations in the middle game.

But thoughtless pawn grabbing can take other forms. Sometimes a player will deliberately offer pawns for the sake of opening lines he obtains when these pawns are cleared out of the way. To capture such pawns is a double mistake – not only is valuable time wasted in capturing them, but the very capture opens up attacking lines for the opponent.

This is particularly dangerous when you capture center pawns at a stage when your own king is still in the center. But the outcome can be just as disastrous if you are castled and snatch a pawn or two on the files leading to your castled position. You may be able to make up for the time lost; whether you can defend yourself against the assault on the open lines is much more doubtful.

The moral of this chapter is, *don’t grab pawns thoughtlessly!* But if, after taking due precautions, you feel you can safely capture, then act on your convictions.

The Poisoned b-pawn

Queen’s Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.Bf4 Nf6 3.Nf3 e6 4.e3 c5 5.c4 Nc6 6.Nc3 a6 7.Qa4?

Up to this point White has developed along sound lines. The early queen move, however, is sheer waste of time.

7…Bd7

A typical reply to premature development of the queen. Black threatens 8…Nxd4 winning a pawn because of the attack on White's queen.

8.Qd1 Qa5

This move has a point because it threatens a pin with …Ne4.

9.Qb3?

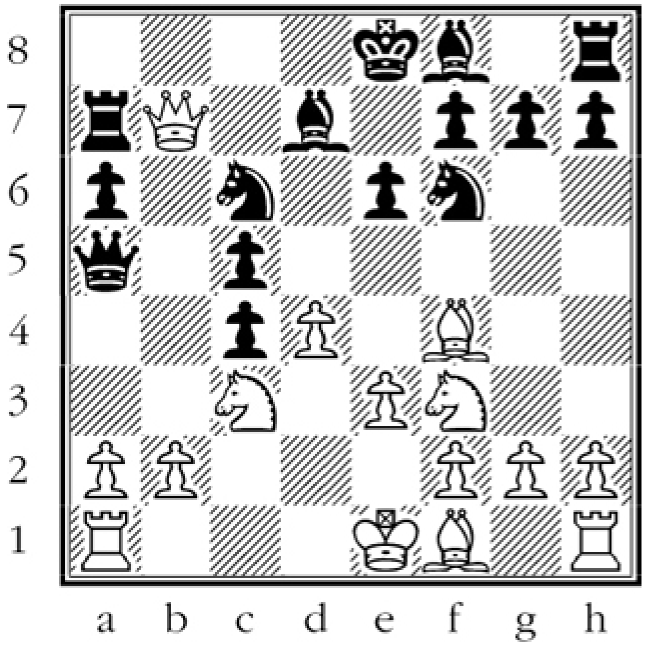
Another time-wasting queen move. Note that White has taken three moves to get his queen to b3 – which normally should take a single move.

9…dxc4

This looks like a careless move. Oughtn't Black to be defending his unguarded b-pawn?

Not when White is about to commit a flagrantly ill-judged pawn grab. Chess literature abounds in games where the queen has been lost after capturing a harmless-looking b-pawn which turned out to be quite securely (though indirectly) guarded after all. That is what happens here.

10.Qxb7?? Ra7! (D)



White resigns. A ludicrous tableau. White's queen is trapped!

Pawn Grabbing Based on Miscalculation

Sicilian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 Nc6 7.f3

Black should now continue his development with 7…Bg7 and 8…0-0. Instead, he commits an error of judgment by developing his queen prematurely.

7…Qb6

This looks promising, as White's knight at d4 is now doubly attacked. True, White can defend the knight with the developing move Be3 – but in that case his b-pawn will be deprived of protection. Black is therefore well content with the queen move, which seems to create a puzzling problem for White.

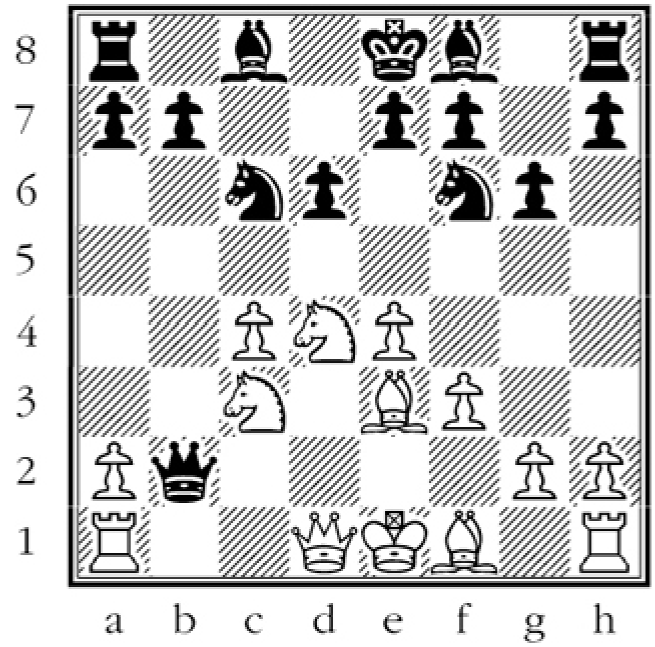
8.Be3!

A surprise! White makes the "impossible" move, and leaves his unprotected b-pawn in the lurch.

Now Black is confronted with a difficult choice. He can carry out his original intention and capture the b-pawn; or he can beat a shame-faced retreat with 8…Qd8. But if he refuses the pawn, he loses valuable time, and also confesses that his whole plan was wrong. If he leaves his queen at b6, White continues Qd2 (protecting the b-pawn and the bishop at e3), with the formidable threat of Ne6, attacking Black's queen.

So, if only as a matter of pride, Black captures the pawn.

8…Qxb2??? (D)



But this is a ruinous blunder, for now the queen is trapped!

9.Na4 Qa3

After 9…Qb4+ 10.Bd2 Black loses his queen as in the actual play.

10.Bc1! Qb4+ 11.Bd2 Qa3 12.Nb5 Black resigns.

The black queen is left without a single flight square – proper punishment for an impetuous pawn-grabbing expedition.

Black's Pawn Grabbing Opens the Center Files

Vienna Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.fxe5 Nxe4 5.Nf3 Bg4 6.Qe2 Nc5?

He wastes time with the knight to put it on a worse square. Instead of this third move with the knight, a simple 6…Nxc3 was in order.

7.d4 Bxf3 8.Qxf3 Qh4+

Black looks forward to 9.Qf2 (protecting the d-pawn) 9…Qxf2+ 10.Kxf2 Ne4+ with an easy game.*

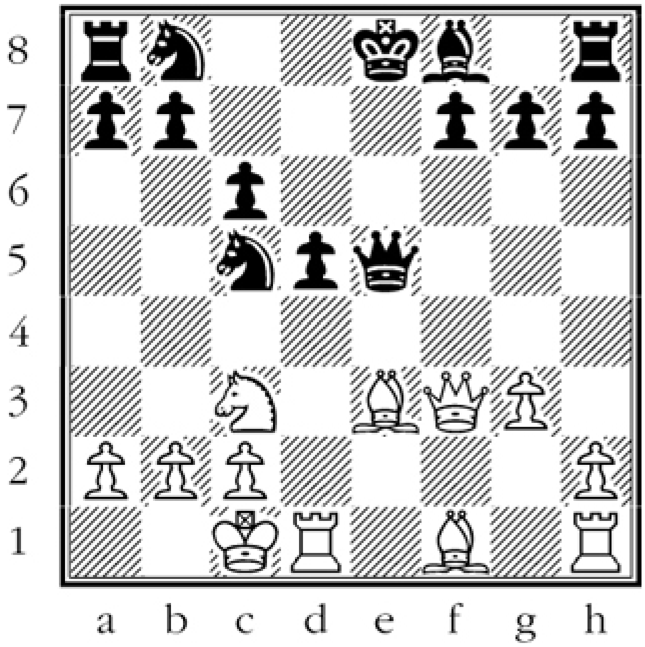
9.g3!

An unpleasant surprise. Black hadn't expected to grab a pawn, but he captures the d-pawn to "save face."*

9…Qxd4 10.Be3! Qxe5

More pawn grabbing and more loss of time.

11.0-0-0 c6 (D)



White has a considerable lead in development, both center files are open, and Black’s king is still in the center. The position is perfect for further sacrifices by White, relying on the use of the open files and the gains of time made possible by Black’s pawn grabbing.

12.Nxd5! cxd5 13.Rxd5

Now Black’s queen must lose more time. The most interesting line is 13…Qe4 14.Bb5+ Nc6 15.Bxc5!! Qxf3 16.Bxc6+ bxc6 17.Re1+ Be7 18.Rxe7+ Kf8 19.Rxa7+ Kg8 20.Rxa8#. A long variation, but once Black captures the queen he has no choice.

13…Qe6 14.Bc4 Qe4 15.Bxc5!! Qxf3 16.Re1+ Be7 17.Rxe7+ Kf8 18.Rd8#

White made splendid use of the two open files resulting from Black’s immoderate pawn grabbing.

Catastrophe on the Open Center Files

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.exd5 Nxd5

Repeated moves with the same piece should be avoided in opening play. Hence 4…exd5 would be correct.

5.Nf3 c5 6.Nxd5 Qxd5

Bringing out the queen at a very early stage – another faulty move, as she will be exposed to attack.

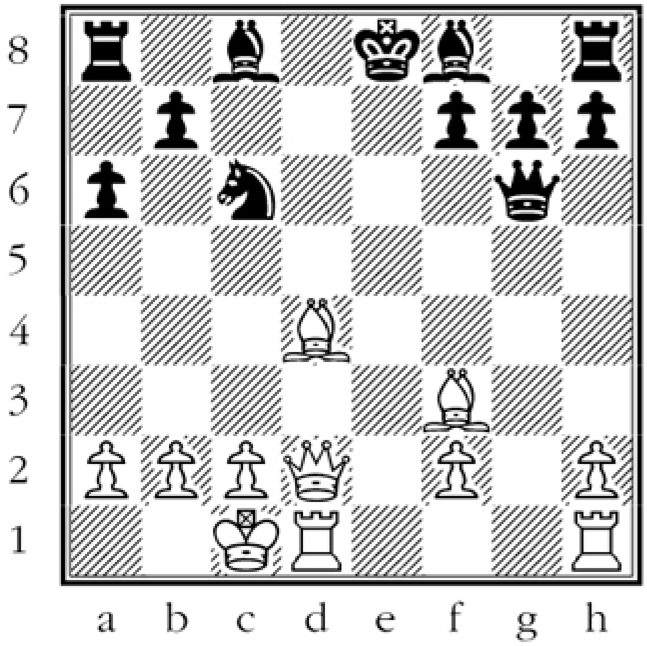
7.Be3 cxd4 8.Nxd4 a6 9.Be2! Qxg2

The black queen goes far afield to grab an unimportant pawn. Black loses time, his queen gets out of play, and White gets an important open line on the g-file. It all adds up to a very unfavorable deal for Black.

10.Bf3 Qg6 11.Qd2 e5

Black is far behind in development, and he sees that after the quiet continuation 11…Be7 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.Rhg1 White has a winning attack on the open g-file.

12.0-0-0! exd4 13.Bxd4 Nc6 (D)



White’s sacrifice of the knight allows him to carry out a swift and merciless attack on the open center files.

14.Bf6!! Qxf6

If 14…gxf6 15.Bxc6+ forces mate.

15.Rhe1+ Be7

After 15…Be6 the pinned bishop is useless against 16.Qd7#.

16.Bxc6+ Kf8

Or 16…Qxc6 and White relies on another pin for 17.Qd8#!.

17.Qd8+!! Bxd8 18.Re8#

A beautifully engineered attack by White, but Black’s disastrous pawn grabbing gave White his chance.

Pawn-Grabbing Endangers Black’s Castled Position

King’s Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 Bc5 3.Nf3 d6 4.Bc4 Nf6 5.Nc3 0-0 6.d3 Ng4?

After some excellent opening play featuring sensible developing moves, Black goes wrong by moving the already developed knight a second time.

7.Rf1 Nxh2?

Wrong again. True, if 8.Nxh2? Qh4+ recovers the piece advantageously for Black. But White has a powerful alternative – to make use of the murderous open h-file thus presented to him.

8.Rh1! Ng4

Of Black’s eight moves, four have been with this knight!

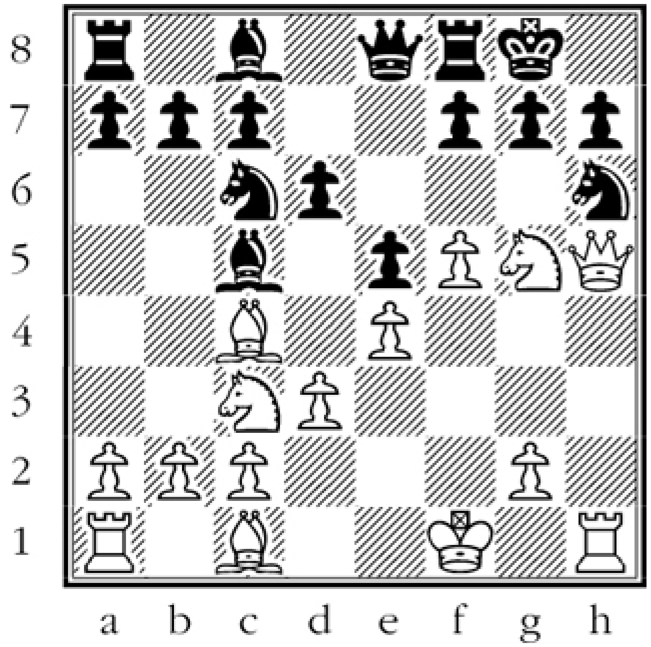
9.Qe2 Bf2+ 10.Kf1 Nc6 11.f5! Bc5 12.Ng5!

Beginning a quickly decisive attack on the open h-file – for example 12…Nf6 13.Nxh7! Nxh7 14.Qh5, and mate follows.

12…Nh6 13.Qh5

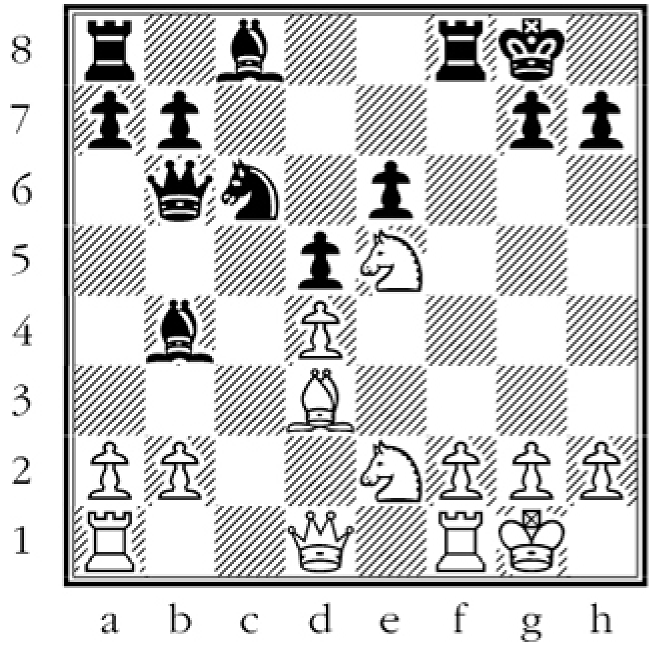
Now it is clear that Black’s senseless pawn grabbing has allowed White to mount a ferocious attack. A delightful possibility here is 13…Qf6 14.Nxh7! Kxh7 15.Bg5 and Black’s queen is trapped.

13…Qe8 (D)



14.Nxh7! Kxh7 15.Bxh6 g6 16.Qxg6+!! fxg6 17.Bxf8#!

Thus White triumphs on the file kindly opened for him by Black's pawn grabbing expedition. (D)



Black to move

By playing 1…Nxe5 2.dxe5 Bc5 Black can obtain a definite advantage because of his pressure on White's f-pawn. Instead of going into this line, however, Black observes that he can win White’s d-pawn. He attacks the pawn twice, and it is defended only once.

This position is important because it is typical – its basic idea appears and reappears again and again. While the white d-pawn seems vulnerable, it is actually guarded sufficiently. But, because this protection is indirect, many a player is unable to resist capturing the tempting pawn.

1…Nxd4?

The best that Black can hope for after this thoughtless capture is to lose “only” the knight.

2.Nxd4 Qxd4???

After this Black loses his queen.

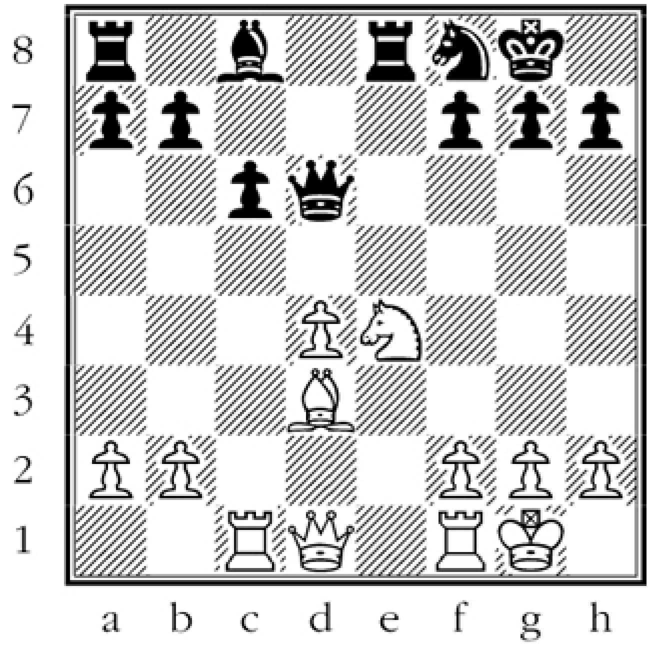
3.Bxh7+!

This is the finesse that Black overlooked! His king is attacked; consequently, he cannot stop to save his unguarded queen, which is also under attack.

3…Kxh7 4.Qxd4 Black resigns.

Having lost his queen in return for a mere bishop, Black is left with a crushing material disadvantage.

The questions Black should have asked himself, and failed to ask, are, “What happens after I capture the pawn”; “Why has he left it unguarded?”; and “Is it really unguarded?” (D)



Black to move

Here the same theme appears in a more subtle form. Black's queen is attacked, and 1…Qxd4 seems a thoroughly satisfactory reply, as there is no possibility of Bxh7+. And yet it would be a mistake to capture the lose pawn. How does White prove that the d-pawn cannot be captured with impunity?

Black's attacked queen should retreat to a place of safety, 1…Qd8, for example, or 1…Qh6. Instead, Black captures the d-pawn.

1…Qxd4

To refute this capture, White plays a move which at first sight looks nonsensical:

2.Nd6!!

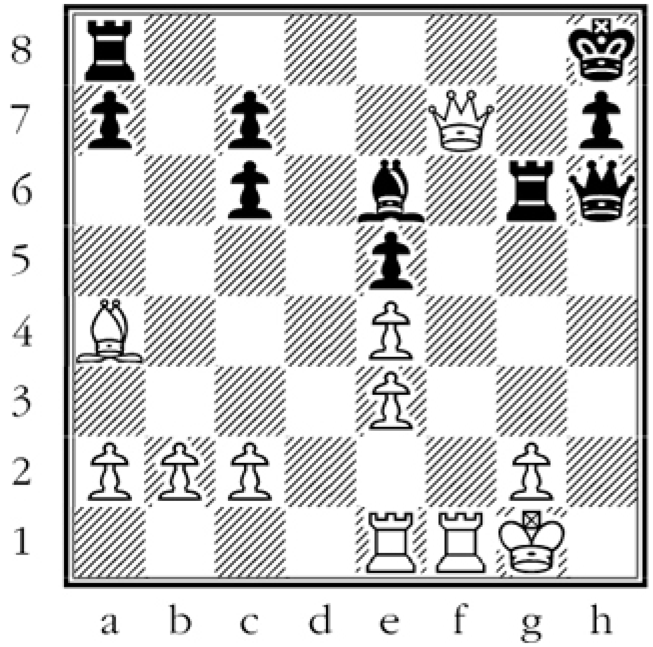
There seems to be no rhyme or reason to this move, as Black can reply 2…Qxd6. But in that event, the unprotected queen is lost after 3.Bxh7+.

Nor is this all. In addition, the advanced knight attacks the black rook at e8. Against these two threats Black has only one resource: **2…Qe5**

Black makes the best of it.

3.Nxe8 Qxe8

White has won the exchange in return for a pawn – a material advantage that will win the game for him. (D)



White to move

White’s choice of a move for his attacked queen should be influenced by the fact that Black has a powerful attacking position. Black is all set up to double rooks on the open g-file, or to proceed even more violently, depending on White’s next move.

Even after 1.Qf3 Rag8 the concentration of force against White’s kingside would eventually be too much for White. Failing to appreciate the power of Black’s formation, White completely neglects the defense by playing: **1.Qxc7??**

This impetuous pawn grab is immediately fatal.

1…Rxg2+! 2.Kxg2 Rg8+

Battered by the crossfire of three enemy pieces, the lone white king cannot hold out very long. Thus if 3.Kf2 Qh2+ and mate next move.

3.Kf3 Bg4+ White resigns.

For if 4.Kg3 Qh3+ 5.Kf2 Qh2#. (Black can also force mate with; 3…Qh5+ etc. The absence of the white queen allows Black to win in a variety of ways.) ***Number Five***

Weakening Your Castled Position

As you have seen in *Number Two*, leaving the king in the center means exposing the king to a dangerous, very possibly fatal, attack. This led us to the conclusion that castling is the best way to safeguard the king.

The castled position, then, is the king's fortress. But, though the king is safer castled than in the center, that does not mean that castling alone assures you complete immunity from attack. If you opponent has an overwhelmingly superior development, he can concentrate more forces for attack than you can supply for defense. Sometimes brilliant sacrifices are available to smash down a defender's barriers.

But in this chapter we are mainly concerned with pawn weaknesses in the castled position. In the case of castling on the kingside, three pawns are involved: the h-pawn, the g-pawn, and the f-pawn. As long as all three pawns are still on their original squares, the castled position remains sturdy and difficult to take by storm.

Yet once a single member of the trio advances, the defender is headed for trouble. For example, suppose the g-pawn advances one square. Then immediately the squares it formerly protected – h6 and f6 (h3 and f3) – must receive protection from pieces. Worse yet, these squares become targets for enemy occupation. Let a hostile queen and knight, or queen and bishop, occupy these squares, and you will see the castled position totter and crumble.

The advance of the h-pawn is also dangerously weakening. Very often the attacker is able to sacrifice a piece for the pawn on h6 (h3), in this way ripping up the castled position and leaving it wide open for large scale invasion. The advance of the f-pawn creates similar problems, and very often opens up a vital diagonal for the hostile bishop.

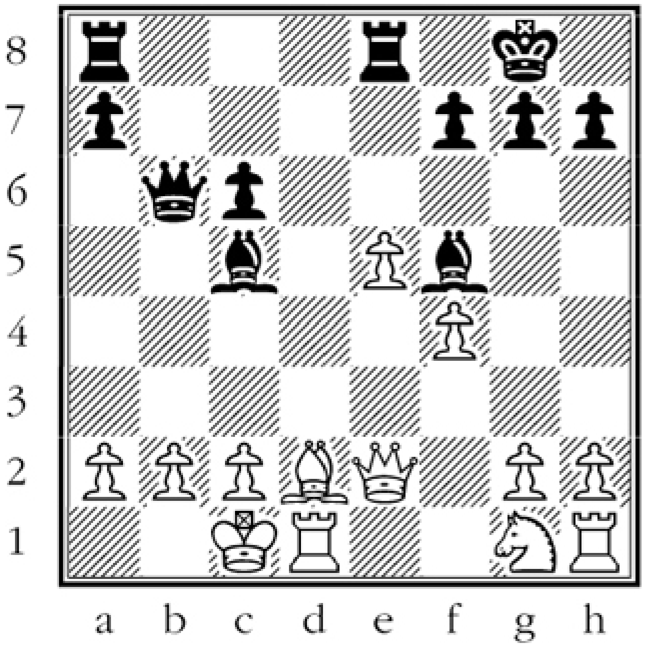
Another serious consequence of any of these pawn advances is that they enable the attacker to open lines by advancing his own pawns and forcing pawn exchanges. Thus, after Black plays …g6. White may reply h2-h4 and h4-h5, exchanging pawns and thus opening the h-file for attack.

Or, after White plays h2-h3, Black may react with …g5 and …g4, likewise obtaining an open file for attack.

Once the attacker succeeds in forcing open a line leading to the castled position, he has enormously improved his prospects of taking the hostile king by storm. As long as the pawns remain on their original squares, they form a roadblock for the attacking pieces. After one of the pawns has advanced, the barrier is much more likely to be breached – by exchanges, by sacrifices, or by violent line opening.

To sum up: you have seen that pawn advances in front of the castled king can be weakening – even dangerous. You should therefore avoid such advances. Sometimes you are forced to make such advances – but at least you can avoid making them needlessly. *Avoid such pawn moves if it is at all possible to avoid them!*

Queenside castling, which we rarely encounter, presents difficulties for the inexperienced player. The castled king has a wider area to guard than on the kingside. Hence the temptation to meet threats with pawn advances is much stronger in the case of queenside castling. This makes it more likely for the defense on this broader front to be upset by violent sacrifices. (D)



Black to move

White's queenside castled position is shaky, menaced as it is by Black's bishops and the open b-file. Right now the castled pawn position is intact, but Black's masterly probing soon creates weaknesses that pave the way for brilliant sacrifices.

1…Bd4! 2.c3 Rab8! 3.b3 Red8! 4.Nf3

For if 4.cxd4 then 4…Qxd4 wins at once. White's weakened castled position is now riddled with weaknesses.

4…Qxb3!!!

Beautiful play, made possible by the pawn weaknesses.

5.axb3 Rxb3

Threatens mate.

6.Be1 Be3+!! White resigns.

Black mates next move. A convincing demonstration of the disastrous effect of weakening pawn moves.

How Pawn Advances Weaken the Castled Position

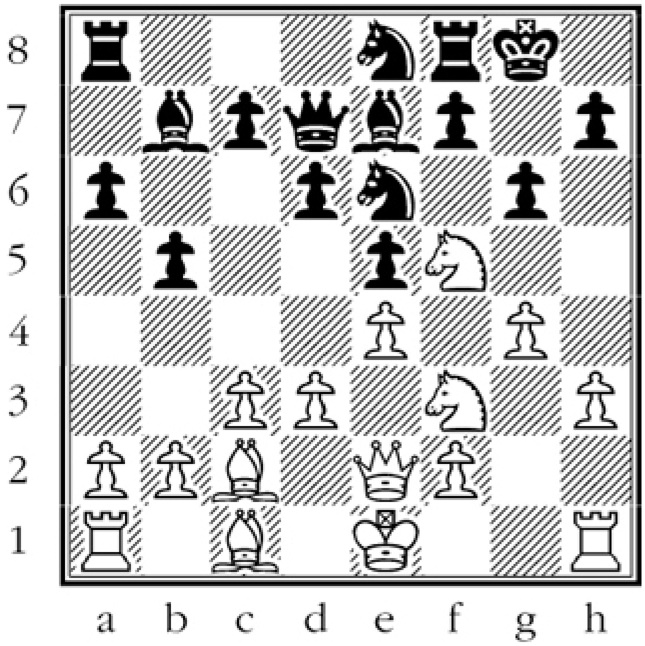
Ruy Lopez

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.d3 d6 6.c3 Be7 7.h3 0-0 8.Qe2 Ne8 9.g4

This advance is not weakening as White intends to castle on the queenside.

9…b5 10.Bc2 Bb7 11.Nbd2 Qd7 12.Nf1 Nd8 13.Ne3 Ne6 14.Nf5 g6? (D)

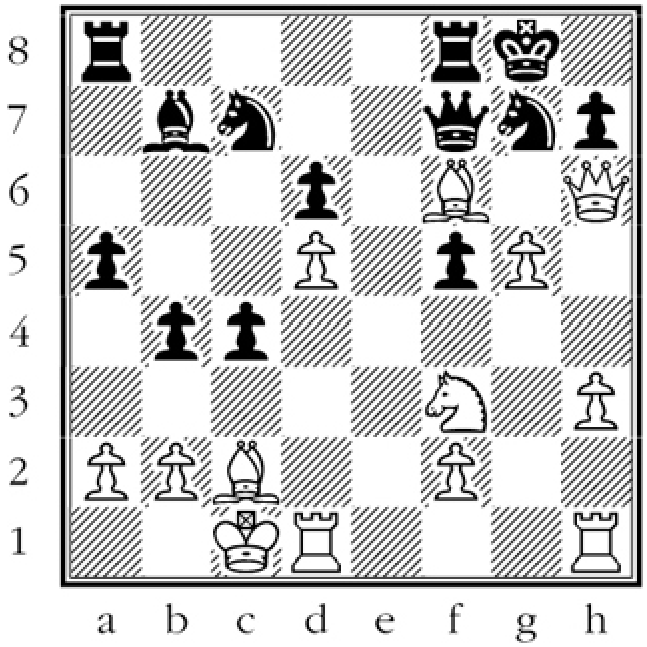


Impatiently brushing off the powerfully posted knight. But now his castled positioned is weakened.

15.Nxe7+ Qxe7 16.Be3 N8g7 17.0-0-0 c5 18.d4 exd4 19.cxd4 c4 20.d5 Nc7 21.Qd2 a5 22.Bd4! f6 23.Qh6! b4 24.g5! f5 25.Bf6! Qf7

Thanks to Black's weakening 14th move, White's pieces have infiltrated powerfully at h6 and f6.

26.exf5! gxf5 (D)



27.g6!! Qxg6

If 27…Qxf6 28.Qxh7#!.

28.Bxg7 Black resigns.

Black loses a piece, as 28…Qxg7 is refuted by 29.Rhg1, winning the queen by a pin. White took advantage of the pawn weakening in superb style.

How Pawn Advances Allow Line-Opening

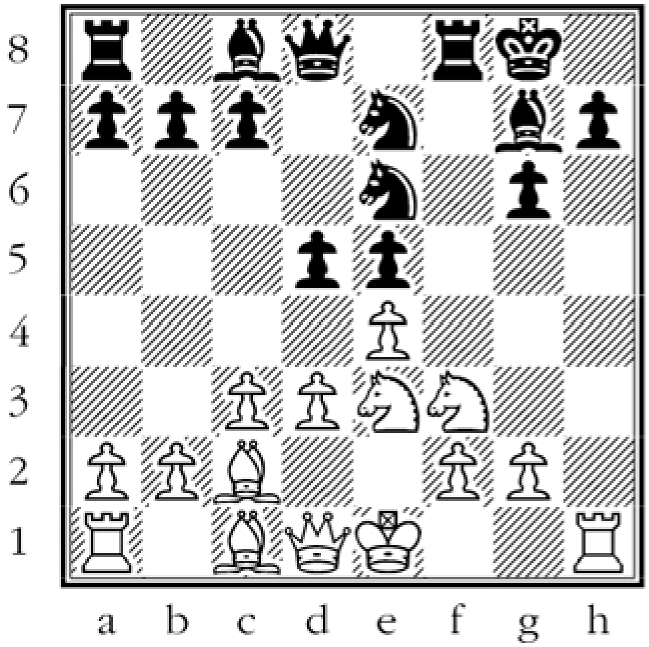
Ruy Lopez

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.d3 d6 5.c3 g6

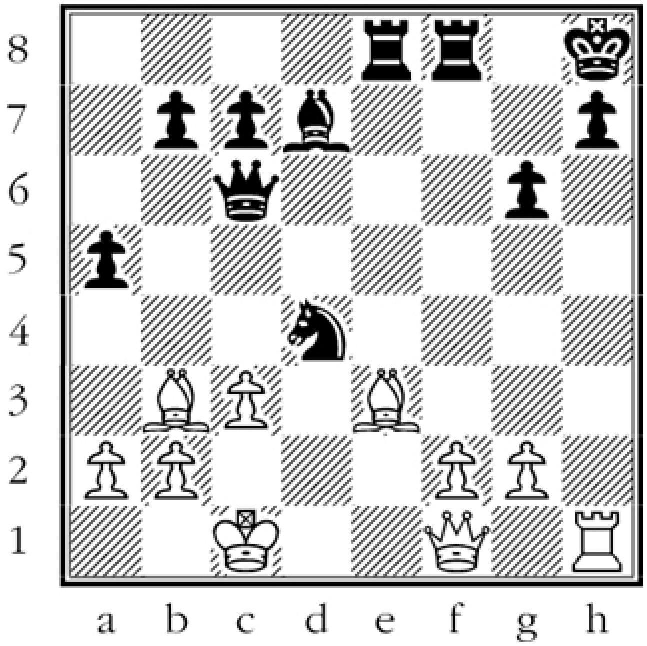
Played in order to develop his dark-square bishop, but it creates the possibility of a later h2-h4 and h4-h5, opening up the h-file by hxg6.

6.Nbd2 Bg7 7.Nf1 0-0 8.Ba4 Nd7 9.Ne3 Nc5 10.Bc2 Ne6 11.h4! Ne7 12.h5 d5 13.hxg6 fxg6 (D)



As predicted. Now White has a formidable attacking weapon in the h-file.

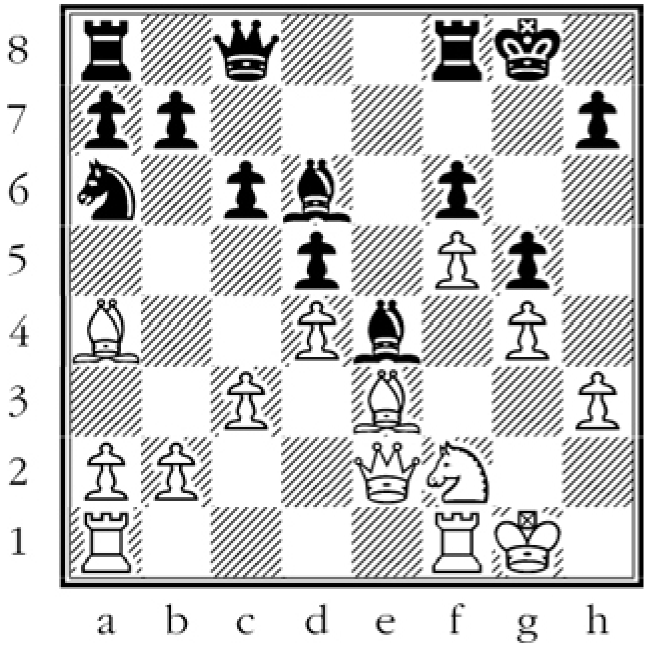
14.exd5 Nxd5 15.Nxd5 Qxd5 16.Bb3 Qc6 17.Qe2 Bd7 18.Be3 Kh8 19.0-0-0 Rae8 20.Qf1! a5 21.d4! exd4 22.Nxd4 Bxd4 23.Rxd4! Nxd4 (D)



Now White's carefully prepared attack is ready to roll.

24.Rxh7+!! Kxh7 25.Qh1+ Kg7 26.Bh6+ Kf6 27.Qh4+ Ke5 28.Qxd4+ Black resigns.

White mates next move. Note the connection between Black's weakening fifth move, White's line-opening 11th, 12th, and 13th moves, and the brilliant sacrifice on move 24. (D)



Black to move

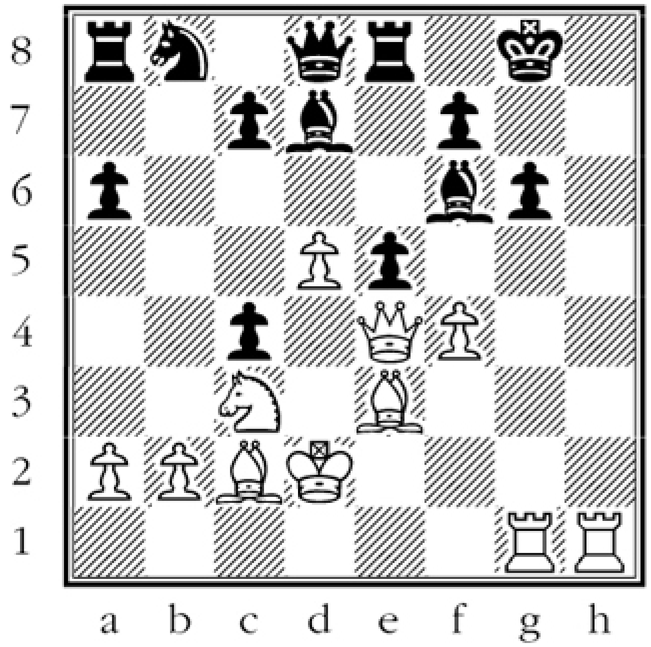
Imagine that White's kingside pawns are still on their original squares. Even if they were, Black's bishops would still be powerful. But with White's pawns advanced, his castled position is wide open to attack. The deadly bishops penetrate into the castled position with irresistible force.

Before we see Black's winning procedure, there is one other aspect of the position that we must study. Note that Black has advanced two of his kingside pawns without exposing his king to danger. Why is the advance of White's kingside pawns a serious mistake; why is the advance of Black's kingside advance of no importance?

What influences our reply is the placement of each player's pieces. White's forces are not posted for attack, so that Black has nothing to fear! Black's bishops, on the other hand, are trained menacingly on the kingside.

Thus, White's advanced pawns give Black the opportunity for devastating attack. Black's bishops give him the means for carrying out such an attack. Here is how it is done: **1…Bh2+! 2.Kxh2 Qc7+ 3.Bf4 Qxf4+ 4.Kg1 Qg3#!**

Observe how Black's pieces have infiltrated into the squares weakened by the advance of White's pawns. Observe, too, that White's pieces can contribute nothing to the defense. (D)



White to move

Black has the same kind of weakness as in the previous example – his h-pawn is gone, his advanced g-pawn is a target. As for White, his rooks have a powerful sweep on open files leading to the black king. Note also that White's bishops are aggressively posted.

1.Rxg6+!

You can always expect such startling explosions when one player has weaknesses and his opponent has powerfully posted pieces.

1…fxg6

Declining the rook doesn't help, for after 1…Kf8 2.Bc5+ is decisive.

2.Qxg6+ Kf8

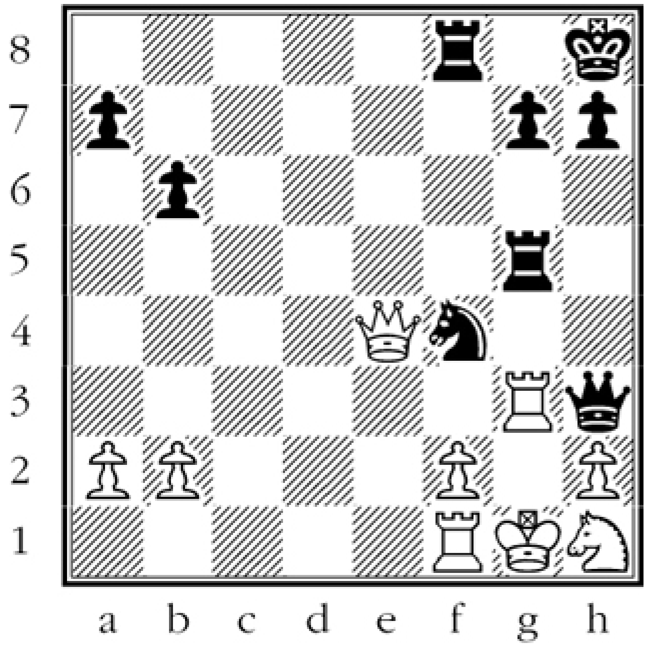
A pretty alternative finish is 2…Bg7 3.Rh8+! Kxh8 4.Qh7#!.

3.Bc5+ Re7

Or 3…Be7 4.Rh8#.

4.Qxf6+ Black resigns.

No matter how Black plays, White ends it all with 5.Rh8#. You will find it worthwhile to study this extremely instructive example. A weakening pawn move opened the h-file, which is bound to serve as White's highway to victory. *The advanced g-pawn serves as a further target which is sure to be demolished by White.* Result: a decisive sacrificial attack. (D)



Black to move

The absence of even one pawn from the castled position often exposes the king to a dangerous attack. The reason is that hostile pieces may gain a foothold on squares that are not guarded by the missing pawn. Here, for example, a spectacular mate is possible.

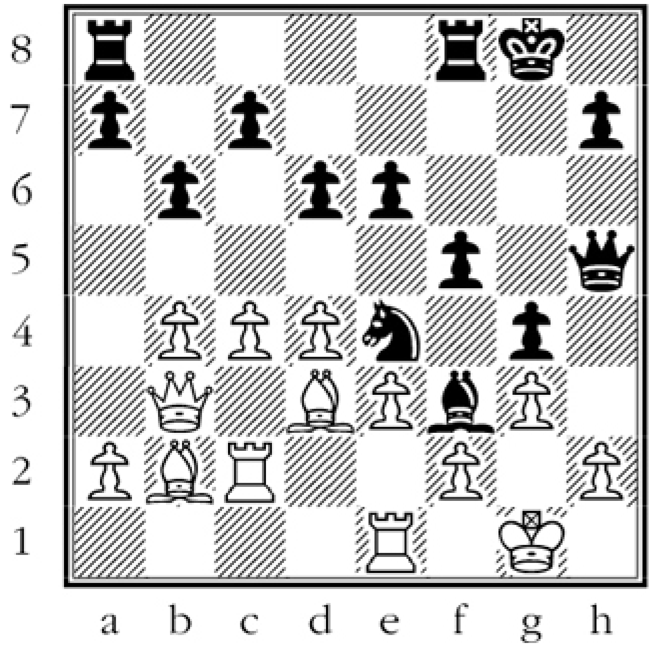
White's kingside suffers from the disappearance of his g-pawn from g2. His h3-and f3-squares are weakened by the absence of their natural pawn protector and need to be guarded by pieces. Such defensive needs are wasteful and also have an additional drawback – there is no telling when some startling tactical surprise may crush the defense.

On the surface it seems that White has covered up the gap fairly well. He has swung around his queen rook to the defense of the castled position and his knight gives added support, though at the cost of dangerously crowding the king's position.

Nevertheless, the organic weakness of the castled position – the absence of the g-pawn – has allowed a threatening rush of Black pieces to the kingside. And here is the result: **1…Qg2+!!! 2.Rxg2**

Or 2.Qxg2 Ne2# – an equally delightful smothered mate.

2…Nh3#! (D)



Black to move

White has weakened his kingside by playing g2-g3. Worse yet, he played his king bishop to d3 instead of g2. On the latter square, this bishop would have guarded the long diagonal against inroads by Black’s bishop. As matters stand, Black can win by means of an effective sacrifice!

Has White developed his pieces effectively? What are the facts? White’s queen is cut off from the kingside and can barely move. The white rooks stand on closed files; the white bishops aim along closed diagonals!

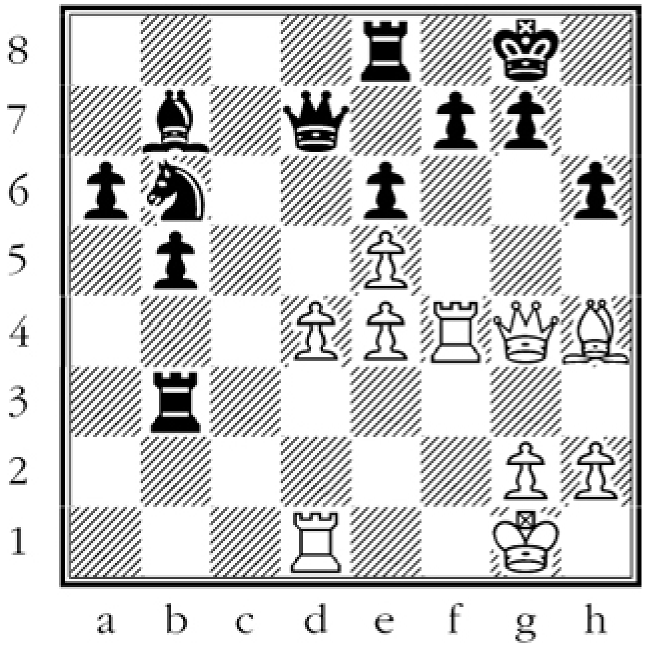
So badly jumbled are White’s pieces that they can contribute virtually nothing to the defense of the white king.

What of Black’s development? His bishop has an unshakable grip on the kingside. Black’s queen is aggressively poised for attack. The king rook can come into action by …Rf6.

To sum up: White has weakened his kingside by playing g2-g3. He has failed to neutralize this weakness by striving for a good defensive formation. What happens now?

1…Qxh2+!!! 2.Kxh2 Rf6! White resigns!

White is helpless against the threat of …Rh6+ followed by …Rh1#. (See the power of Black’s bishop on the diagonal!) (D)



White to move

Black’s extra piece is of little value, for his kingside is denuded of protection, and it is on the kingside that the game will be decided. For White can force a fatal weakness in Black’s castled position. Black’s king will succumb quickly, deprived of any aid from the other black pieces.

1.Bf6!

The key to the situation. Black’s only answer to the threatened mate is to advance still another pawn in front of his king.

1…g6 2.Qh4

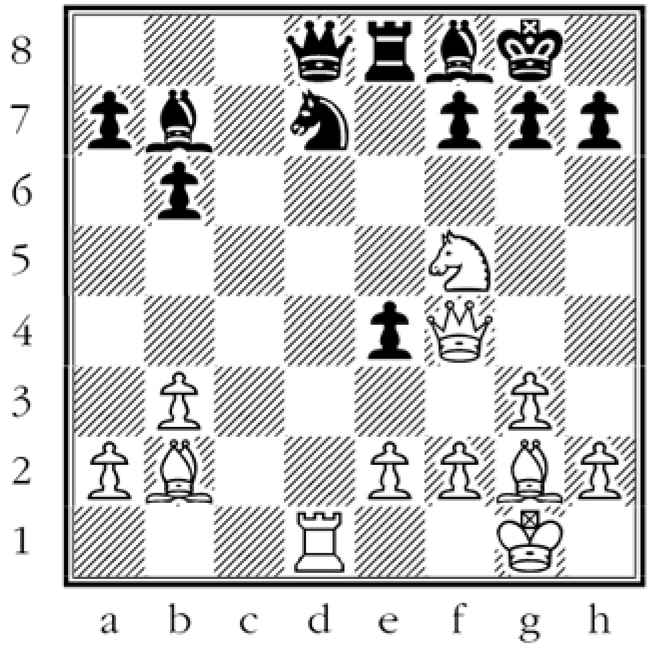
Whereas White has three powerful pieces cooperating in the attack, Black’s king is on his own – no help from his forces. So Black must rely on king moves or on weakening pawn moves – feeble resources against White’s murderous attack.

2…Kh7

Or 2…h5 3.Qg5 Kh7 4.Rh4 and Black has no defense against 5.Rxh5+ etc.

3.Qxh6+!! Kxh6 4.Rh4#

Right to the bitter end Black’s king had no support from the other black pieces. Note how quickly White triumphed after forcing a weakening in the castled position with 1.Bf6!. (D)



White to move

The first thing you notice here is that White’s pieces are posted very aggressively. His bishop at b2 hits right at the heart of Black’s castled position; his queen and knight support the attack; his rook commands the open d-file. How does White proceed to force the game?

What use can White make of his superior development? To answer this question, we must first note that Black’s pieces are in extremely passive positions. The black pieces are either defensive or useless.

In one sense, though, Black is lucky. He has no weaknesses on the kingside. Therefore, no matter how formidable White’s attacking formation looks, he has no real target. What White must do, then, is to create weaknesses in Black’s castled position.

1.Nh6+!!

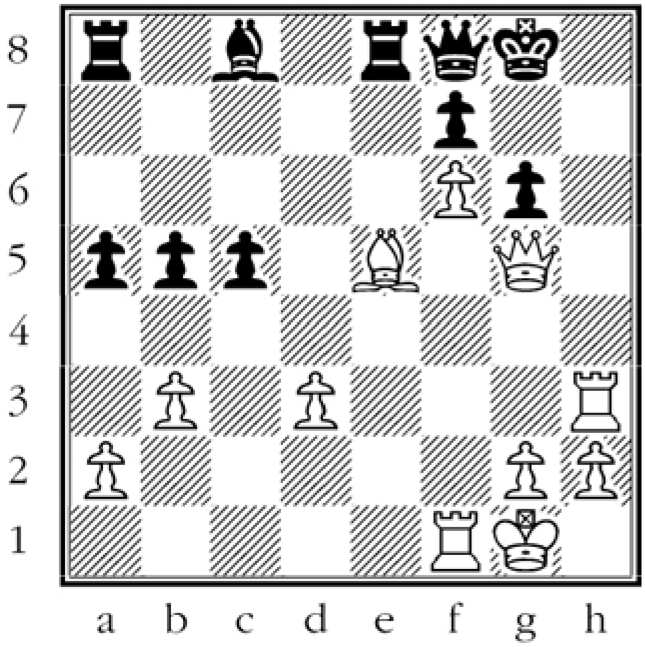
This impudent knight must be captured. If 1…Kh8 2.Nxf7+ forks king and queen. Even stronger (after 1…Kh8) is 2.Qxf7! with the irresistible threat of 3.Qg8#.

1…gxh6

Now that Black’s castled position is breached, White wins quickly.

2.Rxd7! Qxd7 3.Qf6 Black resigns.

He is helpless against the threat of 4.Qh8#, which has been made possible by the smashing of Black’s kingside. (D)



White to move

Black’s castled position has been sadly weakened. His h-pawn is gone, his g-pawn has had to advance. Meanwhile White has established a menacing pawn wedge at f6, and all his pieces are admirably poised for an assault on Black’s king. In fact, White forces mate in three moves!

1.Qxg6+!!

A rude shock for Black. But what interests us is this thought: if White can afford to sacrifice his most valuable piece, then Black has indeed damaged his kingside fatally by weakening pawn moves.

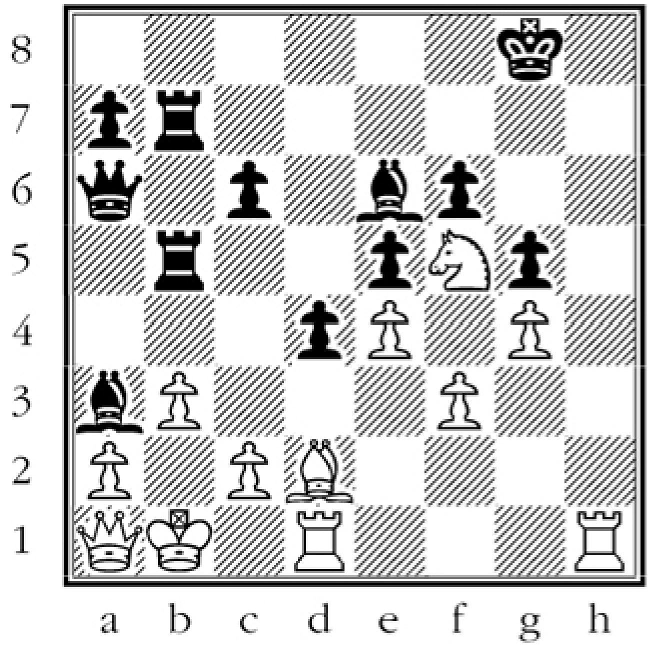
1…fxg6 2.f7+!

The real point of the sacrifice. The long diagonal becomes completely clear, allowing White to set up a familiar mating pattern. The rook on h3, supported by the bishop, forms this mating pattern.

2…Qxf7 3.Rh8#

One of those combinations that are so distinguished in their artistry that we can play them over again and again and still enjoy them. And again, observe that what makes the artistry possible is *the weakening of Black’s castled position*.

Why do players weaken their castled position? Some do not realize the weakening effect of the moves; others cannot help themselves. In this case, it was White's earlier threats that cleverly forced Black to weaken his castled position. (D)



Black to move

White has made a serious mistake by castling on the queenside. Black has concentrated his rooks for a heavy attack on the open b-file. White imagines that he has removed all danger by playing b3. But, as so often happens, the moved pawn is a target rather than a barricade.

That White has a target at b3 is bad enough. What makes matters even worse is that his queen is paralyzed and his other pieces contribute little to the defense.

This makes Black bold – he looks for a radical solution. Here it is:

1…Rxb3+!!

Sacrificing a whole rook to remove the feeble barrier at b3.

2.axb3 Rxb3+!!

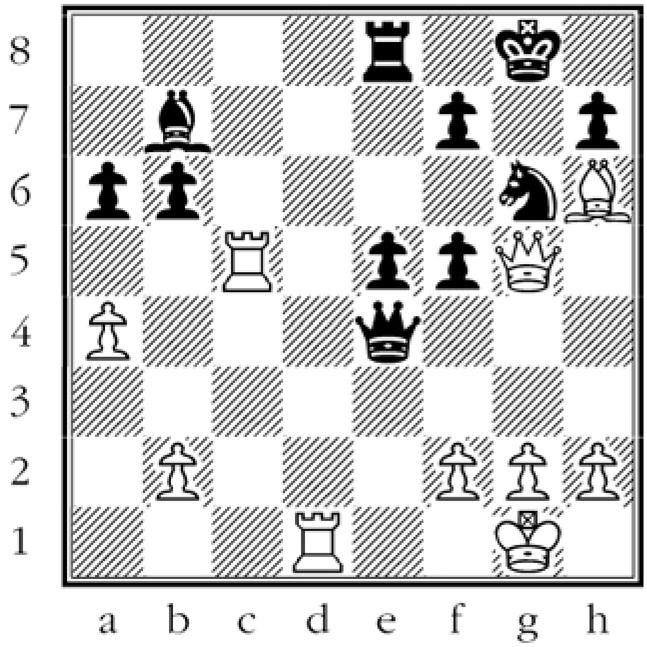
Encore!

3.cxb3 Qd3+

Now everything becomes clear. By smashing up White's flimsy pawn position, Black has been able to strip the white king of all defensive resources.

4.Ka2 Qxb3#

A beautiful combination, but if we ask, what made it possible? – the answer is: *the weakening of White's castled position.* White castled into an open file, and he had a pawn target that attracted brilliant sacrifices. (D)



White to move

White is the exchange ahead – he has a rook for knight and pawn. Hence he seems to have a winning game, with victory not too far away.

Is his immediate task to save his attacked rook on c5? Or is there more involved in the position?

What really matters is that Black has fatally weakened his kingside by *the removal of his g-pawn from its original square*. This has created infiltration points at his h6 and f6 squares for the white pieces.

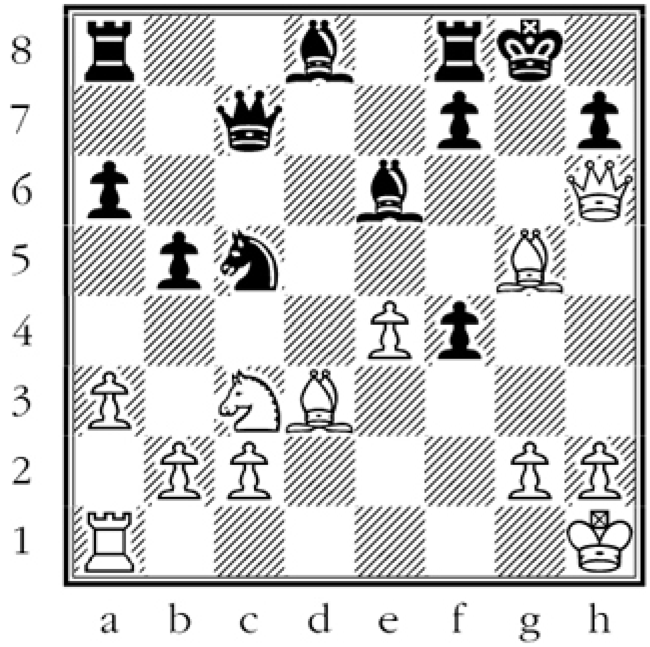
So serious are these weaknesses that one's first impression is that White can force checkmate by 1.Qf6. Unfortunately, if White moves his queen from the g-file, Black has the reply 1…Qxg2#.

Thus the real problem is: how can White execute his mating threat without being exposed to Black's mating threat? White's solution is subtle and effective.

1.Rc8!! Rxc8

The main point is that after 1…Bxc8 Black no longer threatens mate on the long diagonal but allows 2.Qf6 – followed by 3.Qg7#.

2.Rd8+ Rxd8 3.Qxd8+ Nf8 4.Qxf8# (D)



White to move

White has sacrificed a rook to force a fatal breach in Black's castled position. The disappearance of Black's g-pawn has allowed White's menacing queen to occupy the far-advanced outpost h6.

White has a sparkling winning method based on the absence of Black's g-pawn from its normal square.

1.Bf6!!

Threat: 2.Qg7#. There is only one reply.

1…Bxf6

Now it seems White has shot his bolt. But…

2.e5!!

Threatens 3.Qxh7#.

2…Nxd3 3.exf6 Black resigns.

Now we are back to the first threat of Qg7#, and there is nothing that Black can do about it. Note that throughout *his queen had no defensive value whatever.*

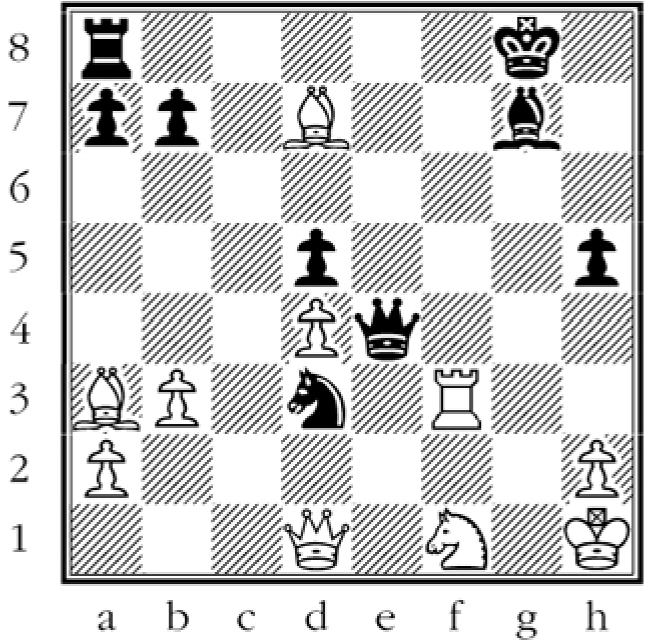
By parting with his g-pawn, *Black created a fatal breach in his castled position.* White took pitiless advantage of the black king's exposed state.

Number Six

Getting Pinned

The best advice about getting pinned is: Don’t!

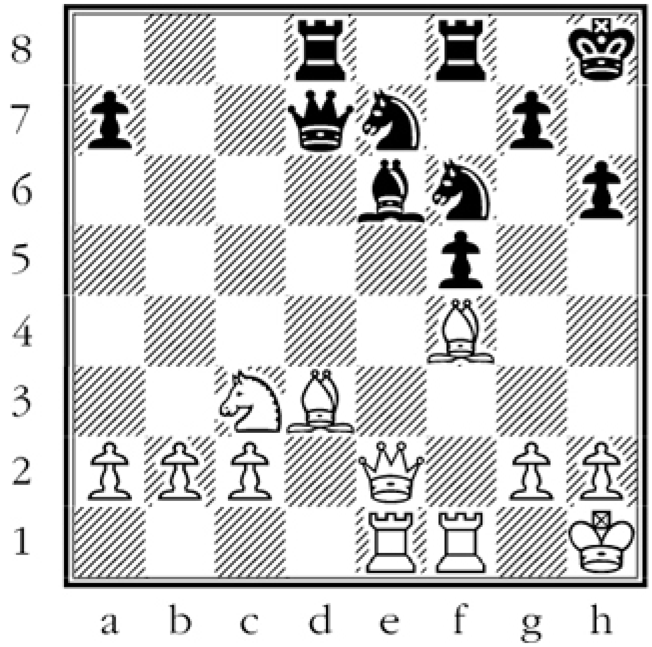
Pins occur more frequently on the chessboard than any other type of attack. Yet, strangely enough, pins are rarely defined or explained. *A pin is an attack on a piece which screens another piece from attack.* A piece that is pinned is tied down. (D)



In the above diagram, Black’s queen pins White’s rook. The queen attacks the rook, which in turn screens the white king from attack. The rook is pinned (tied down to its present square) because a move of the rook would expose the white king to attack by the black queen. (As you know, the laws of chess forbid your making any move that exposes your king to attack by a hostile piece.) To emphasize the helplessness of White’s pinned rook, let us suppose that it is Black’s move, and that he plays 1…Nf2+ forking White’s king and queen. Ones first thought is to reply 2.Rxf2 in order to save the menaced queen. But the pinned rook is helpless; *it cannot move.* White, in check, must move his king, losing his queen by …Nxd1.

The pathetic helplessness of White’s rook in the previous diagram is typical of pins where the screened piece is the king.

Where the screened piece is any other piece but the king, the player subject to the pin has greater freedom of action. If the screened piece is a queen, rook, bishop, or knight, the pinned piece can *legally* move. But though such a move is legal, it is not necessarily advisable. The move of a pinned piece will generally involve a serious loss of material. This is brought out in the following position: (D)

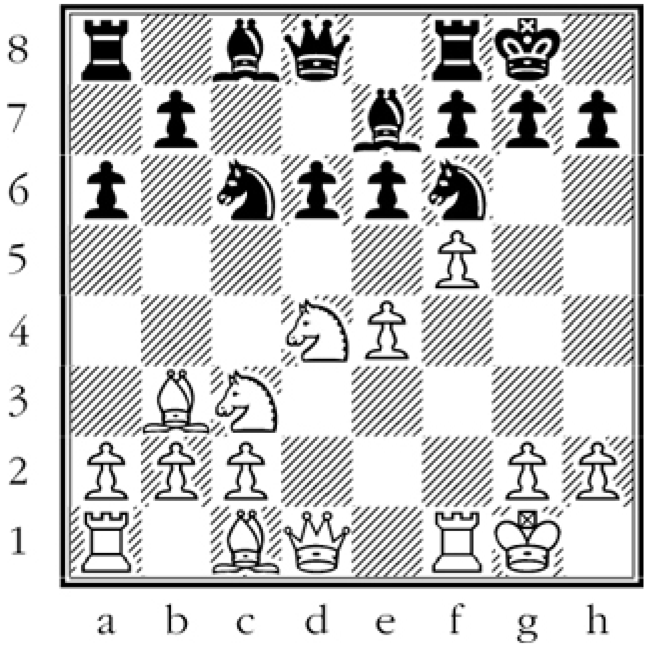


White’s queen, supported by a white rook, pins Black’s bishop, which is protected only once and cannot be protected additionally. If the bishop remains on e6, it is lost; if the bishop moves, the knight at e7, which it screens, is lost. Black can try 1…Ne4, blocking the pin. But after 2.Nxe4 fxe4 3.Qxe4 the pin is renewed and White also threatens 4.Qh7#.

The most bearable pins, as far as the defender is concerned, are those where the pinned piece is guarded by a pawn. In such cases, protection is automatic – and cheap. Where the pinned piece has to be guarded by another piece, you can expect trouble. The pinned piece is tied down, the protecting piece is tied down to the defense of the pinned piece. Thus two units are deprived of much of their mobility and therefore of much of their power.

Another point to remember about the pin is its psychological value. The restraining effect of the pin has a depressing effect on the defender. Pinning and restraining are attacking functions and assure a player the initiative. He has a positive goal – to weaken the pinned piece, to pile up pressure on it, to take advantage of its immobility. The player whose piece is pinned is at a disadvantage. He is at his opponent’s mercy, and must often look on helplessly while his pinned piece is being undermined.

It follows, therefore, that you should avoid the pinning of your pieces. Once you are pinned, your freedom of action is restricted, and you are exposed to threats that may cost you the game. Just as it is important not to neglect your development in the opening stage, it is equally vital not to allow your pieces to be pinned later on. (D)



Black to move

When the f-pawn is advanced after castling, it often happens that a serious weakness is created on the diagonal leading to the king. In this case, it is White who has weakened his position, so that his knight on this diagonal is in danger. How is Black to exploit this?

Black has a powerful move in:

1…Qb6!

This pins White’s knight on d4. The knight, which screens White’s king from attack, is of course unable to move out of the line of attack.

In addition, since the knight is attacked twice and defended only once, it needs additional protection. But how? If 2.Nce2 e5 cruelly exploits the exposed position of the attacked knight. As it cannot leave its post at d4, it is lost in return for a mere pawn.

So White tries a different way:

2.Be3

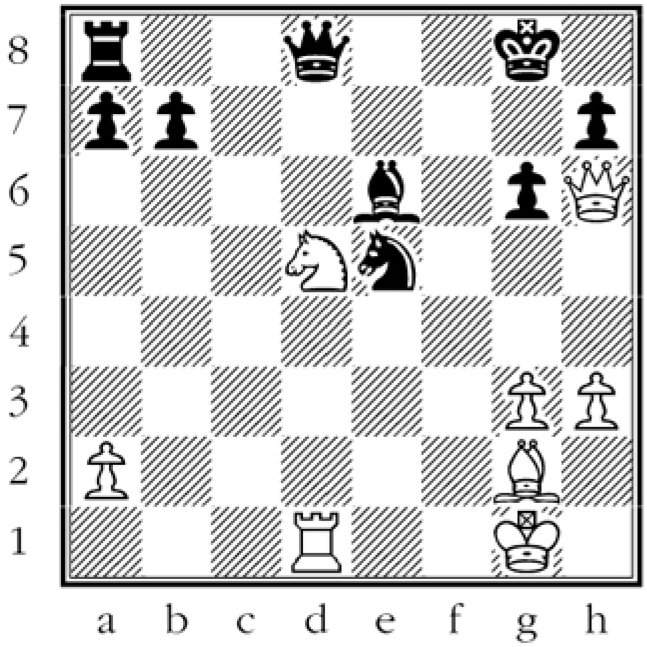
True, this masks the diagonal, but Black can still win a piece!

2…e5

It is White’s misfortune that he cannot retreat the attacked knight to a square from which it will defend the bishop at e3. And if 3.Nxc6, Black first plays 3…Qxe3+ and then 4…bxc6.

3.Na4 Qa7!

By keeping his queen on the diagonal, Black maintains his pin on the knight at d4. White resigns, as he can no longer stave off the loss of a piece. (D)



White to move

White’s course is readily suggested by the uncomfortable position of Black’s bishop and knight on the e-file. Neither piece can protect the other; neither is protected by a pawn; both are vulnerable to an attack along the e-file. This is an ideal setup for a pinning attack.

With Black’s knight and bishop established as the vulnerable targets, your only problem is: should White continue with 1.Re1 or 1.Qe3.

As the white rook is needed at d1 to guard White’s knight, the queen move remains the only feasible one:

1.Qe3

Now Black's knight must not move, for then the bishop is lost.

Nor will 1…Qd6 do, for then 2.Nf6+ wins the black queen.

As for 1…Bxd5, this exposes Black to a new pin: 2.Rxd5 Nd7 (forced) 3.Qd4 and the pinned knight is lost.

1…Qb8 2.Re1

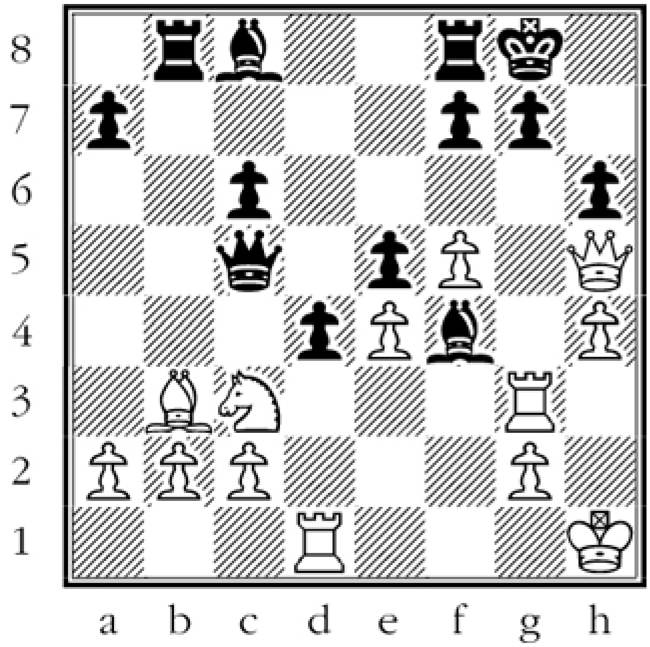
The rook (no longer needed at d1) intensifies the pin. Black's next two moves are forced.

2…Bxd5

Getting out of the pin but running into a worse one.

3.Bxd5+ Nf7 4.Rf1 Black resigns.

The pinned knight is lost. (D)



White to move

White menaces the black king with his rook at g3 and his bishop at b3. This creates pins on Black's g-pawn and f-pawn. However, White's knight is attacked, and so is his rook at g3; his bishop can be removed by …Rxb3. White's timing must be hair-sharp.

White's first move makes use of both pins and prepares to set up a new pin:

1.Qg6!

Threatens 2.Qxg7#. The queen is immune from capture, of course, as Black's f-pawn is pinned.

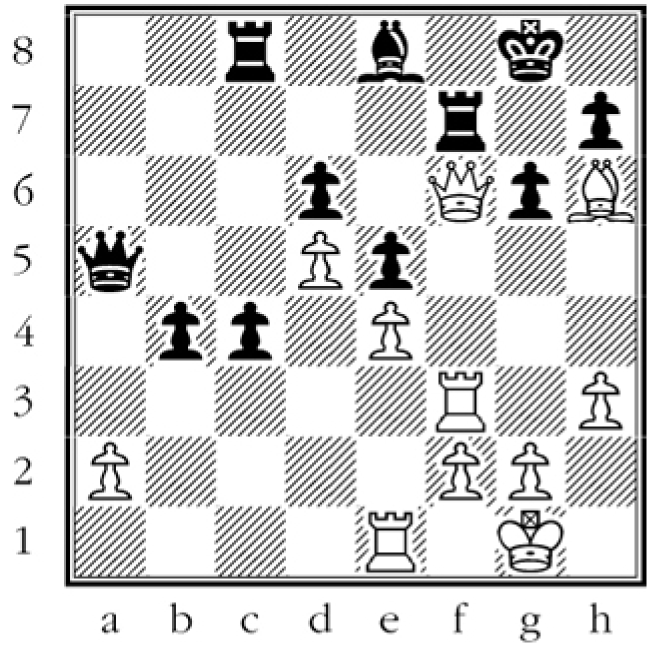
1…Bxg3

The obvious reply.

Blocking the g-file with 1…Bg5 does not help: 2.Rxg5 hxg5 3.f6! (a new pin!) and Black cannot prevent 4.Qxg7#.

2.f6! Black resigns.

Both Black's f-pawn and g-pawn are pinned. Black cannot stop 3.Qxg7#. (D)



White to move

White's queen, f-rook, and bishop make up a powerful attacking unit. Balked by the protective black rook at f7, White – almost! – threatens Qg7# or Qf8#. But this black rook is under too much pressure and, worse yet, it gets no help from the black queen.

Black has weakened his kingside by advancing the g-pawn. It is this loosening move that has enabled white's queen and bishop to take up their invasion posts at f6 and h6.

Momentarily, Black's f-rook valiantly holds the fort. But Black's queen is far off to one side. This leaves Black helpless against the brilliant *pinning attack* that follows.

1.Qe7!!

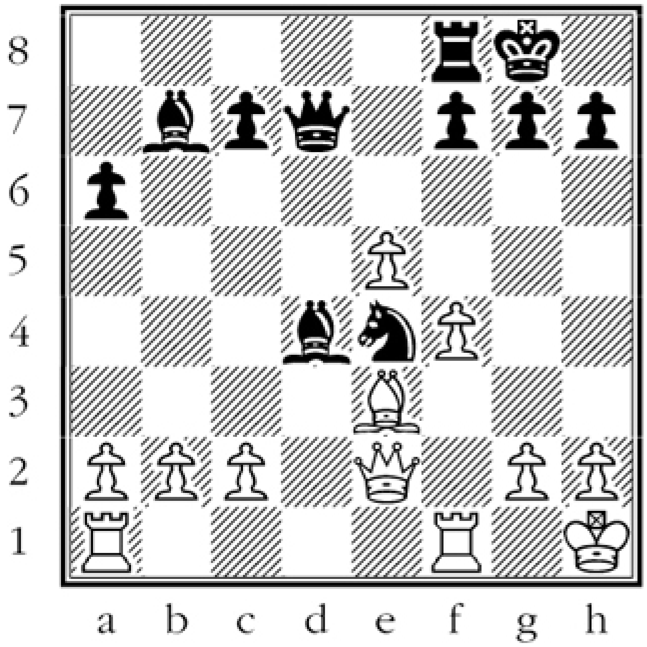
Beautiful. If 1…Rxe7 2.Rf8#; If 1…Rxf3 2.Qg7# Thus the crucial black rook is pinned two ways, as it screens White's access to two vital squares.

1…Qc7

Too late. But Black dare not move his bishop (to stop the following mate), for then the vital rook at f7 falls, with mate the following move.

2.Qf8+! Rxf8 3.Rxf8#

Black lost because (a) he weakened his castled position; (b) he gave one rook too heavy a defensive burden; (c) he thus exposed himself to a deadly pin. (D)



Black to move

Material is fairly even – Black has two minor pieces for rook and two pawns. But what really counts is the fact that Black's bishop on the light squares exerts enormous power on the long diagonal. Black unmasks this power with a deadly pin.

1…Ng3+!

A terrible surprise for White. The unexpected check opens up the long diagonal, and brings Black's queen into action. The effectiveness of Black's attack depends on two pins.

2.hxg3

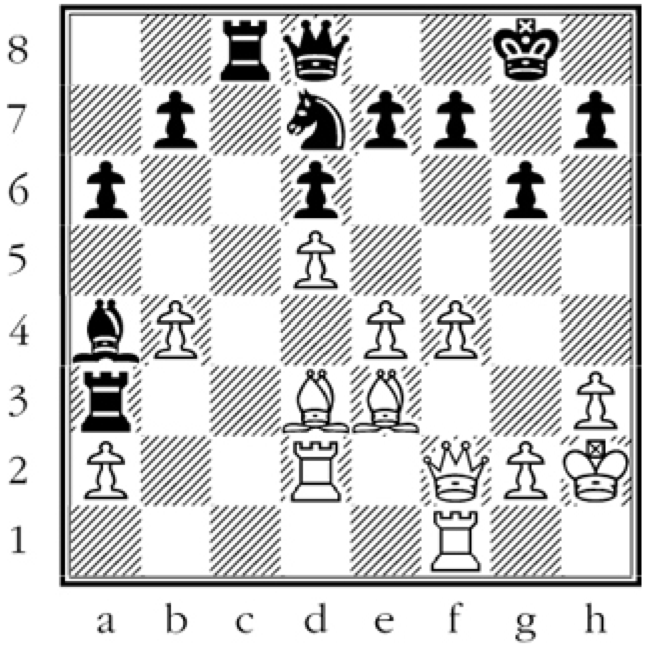
As the knight check forks king and queen, White has no choice: he must capture.

2…Qh3+

White's g2-pawn, pinned by Black's bishop on the long diagonal, cannot capture the black queen. It is this pin that assures the success of Black's attack.

3.Kg1 Bxe3+ White resigns.

If 4.Qxe3 Qxg2#. And if 4.Rf2 or 4.Qf2 Qxg2# mate as well. *(the pinned piece has no protective value.)* (D)



Black to move

What determines the choice of Black's next move? It is the fact that he controls the open c-file. White is on the point of playing Bd4, which will menace the kingside and also prevent any inroad by a black rook at c3.

1…Rcc3!

By playing this move at once Black creates a powerful pin. White's bishop on d3, attacked twice, cannot move because that would lose the screened bishop at e3.

Had Black postponed the rook invasion by one move, he would have given White time for Bd4, consolidating White's position against the rook invasion.

2.Qe2

Forced; but now Black steps up the pinning pressure.

2…Bb5!

Adding to White's troubles – if 3.Bxb5? Rxe3 wins a piece for Black.

3.Rfd1

Another forced move.

3…Qc7!

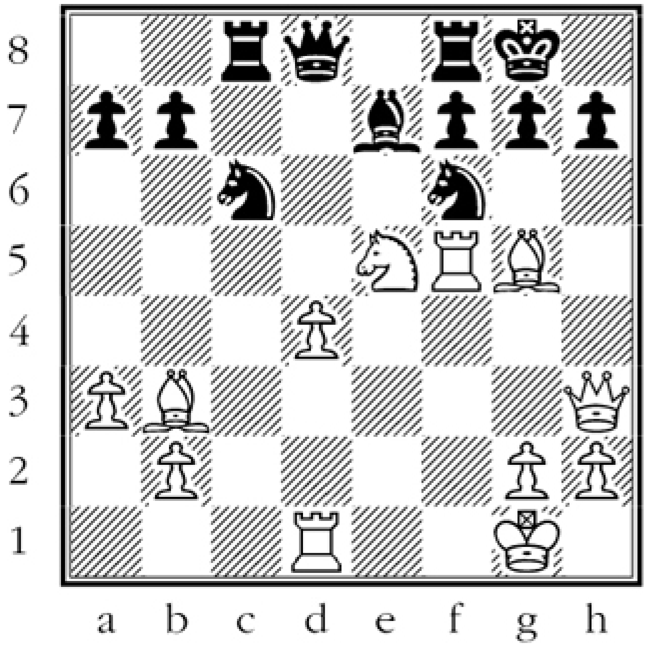
Based on a plan that is revealed by his next move. White desperately tries to break the pin, but it is too late.

4.Bd4 Rxd3!

Creating a different kind of pin.

5.Rxd3 Qc4 White resigns.

White has no defense against the coming 6…Rxd3, which leaves Black a clear piece ahead. (D)



White to move

Sometimes the utilization of a pin can be exceptionally subtle. Here we see at a glance that White’s pin on the f-pawn is extremely threatening. But how is it to be exploited? The decisive method selected by White is remarkably imaginative, though dependent on technical factors.

White’s generally more aggressive position justifies his seeking an immediate decision. We have already concluded that the pin on Black’s f-pawn will be the winning factor.

1.Bxf6!

First he removes the valuable defensive knight.

1…Bxf6

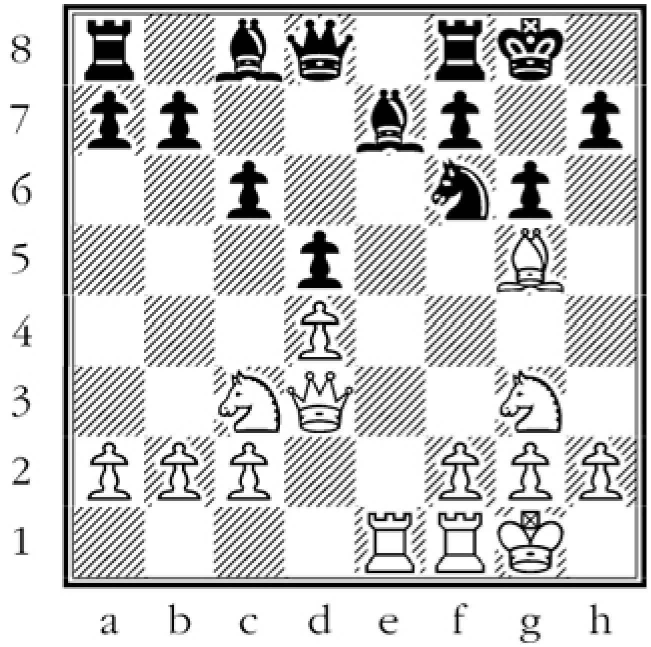
After 1…gxf6 the breakup of Black’s castled pawn position would lose for him in a number of ways. The most obvious is 2.Qg4+ Kh8 3.Nxf7+ etc.

2.Qxh7+!!!

The surprise sacrifice that will take advantage of the pin on Black’s pinned pawn.

2…Kxh7 3.Rh5+ Kg8 4.Ng6! Black resigns.

He has no way of parrying the coming Rh8#. (The f-pawn is pinned, so that …fxg6 is impossible.) (D)



White to move

Black’s position seems quite secure – until you observe that he has badly weakened his kingside with …g6. White’s problem is – how is he to take advantage of the weakness? He solves the problem by means of a brilliant combination.

1.Rxe7!! Qxe7

Now Black’s knight is pinned – in a particularly dangerous way, too. For this knight is not protected by a pawn – thanks to the earlier …g6. Therefore the pinned knight must be guarded by pieces – always a dangerous and costly procedure.

2.Qf3 Kg7

The only other way to protect the pinned knight is 2…Bf5. But then, after 3.Nxf5 gxf5 4.Qg3 Kg7 5.Bxf6+ Kxf6 6.Qh4+! Ke6 7.Re1+, Black can resign.

3.Nce4!!

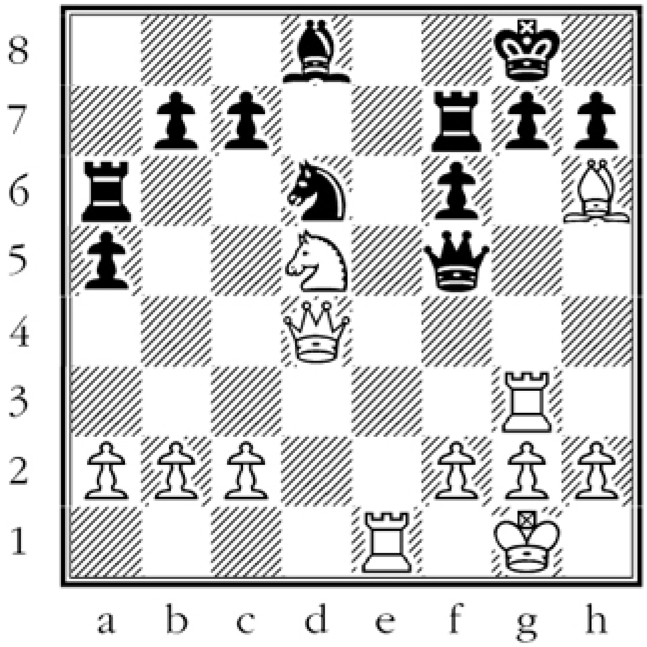
Beautiful play. By sacrificing another piece White crushes Black’s resistance to the pin.

3…dxe4 4.Nxe4 Qe6

If 4…Qxe4 5.Qxf6+ Kg8 6.Bh6 forcing checkmate. Again the weakening of Black's kingside tells against him.

5.Bxf6+ Kg8 6.Qf4 Black resigns.

There is no defense to the threatened Qh6. White's pin was the weapon that smashed Black's kingside. (D)



White to move

Black seems to have a solid defense against the pin on his g-pawn. But this pin is only the beginning of his difficulties; he has placed all his pieces very awkwardly for defensive purposes. Soon the first pin leads to others even more troublesome.

1.Nb4!! axb4 2.Qxd6!!

If now 2…cxd6 3.Re8+ Rf8 4.Rxg7+ Kh8 5.Rxf8#.

2…Qd7

The only way to meet the threat of Re8+.

3.Qd5!!!

Beautiful play. He pins Black's rook on f7 in order to threaten Rxg7+. If 3…Qxd5 4.Re8+ forces mate.

3…Kf8

He must get out of the pin. If 3…g6 4.Rge3! is the winning move.

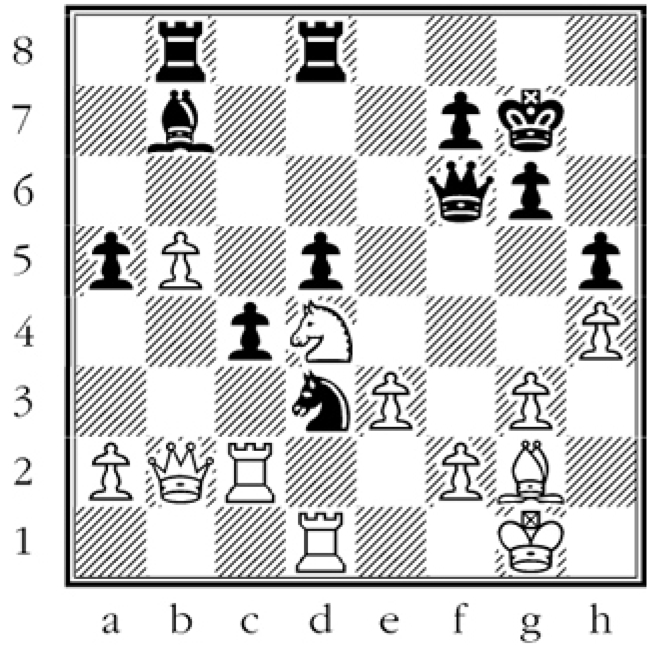
4.Rxg7!!

Another superb move.

4…Qxd5

If now 4…Rxg7 5.Qxd7 and the pinned rook cannot capture White’s queen!

5.Rg8+ Kxg8 6.Re8+ Rf8 7.Rxf8# (D)



White to move

Black’s position seems solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. Especially powerful is his far-advanced knight at d3, well guarded by his passed c-pawn. Yet this position is quite deceptive. Relying on pinning technique, White can smash the setup of Black’s forces.

How White can act incisively is not clear, especially since his queen is attacked. Nor is there a single white piece, with the possible exception of the knight, which even has the appearance of harboring aggressive notions.

1.Rxd3!!

This move is mysterious; yet it will soon expose Black to a winning attack that is based on a pin.

1…cxd3 2.Ne6+!!!

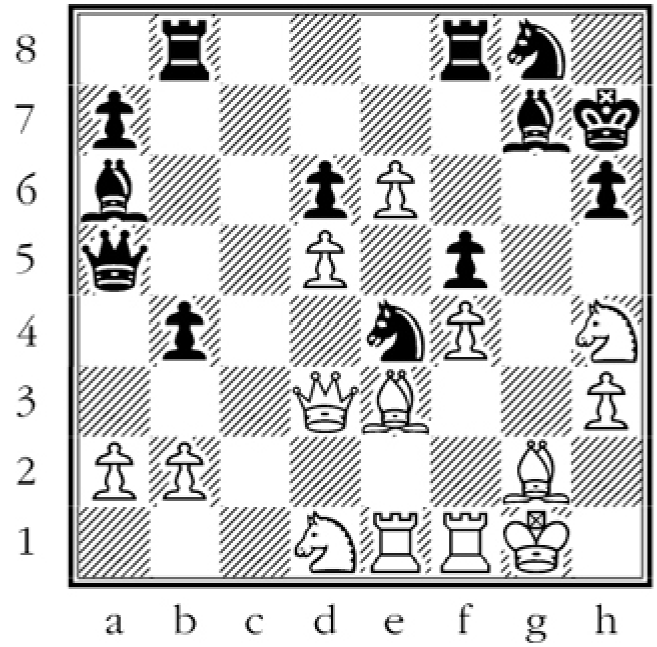
The point of the previous sacrifice. Black cannot play 2…Qxe6 because his queen is pinned.

2…fxe6

Any move of the black king would lose the black queen.

3.Rc7+ Black resigns.

Now everything becomes clear. Black's queen, being pinned, cannot interpose 3…Qf7. Consequently he must move his king, allowing 4.Qxf6 followed by a quick mate. (D)



White to move

Here we have one of the rare cases of a pin that does not work. White's queen is attacked by a pinning bishop at a6. When the queen retreats, White will lose the exchange by …Bxf1 etc. This seems a good example of the power of the pin, but there is much more to the position!

1.Qxe4!!

An amazing move, predicated on the weakness of Black's kingside. If now 1…Bxf1 2.Rxf1 and White has won two pieces for the rook (a material advantage for him). Of course, Black could still go ahead and win the queen, getting mated as in the actual play.

1…fxe4

Black is skeptical. Mate is now forced.

2.Bxe4+ Kh8 3.Ng6+ Kh7 4.Nxf8++ Kh8 5.Ng6+ Kh7

One forced move after another.

6.Ne5+! Kh8 7.Nf7#!

Throughout, *Black's queen remained a passive onlooker.* Again and again, we find that this is the key to a startling combination. As far as the success of White’s combination was concerned, Black’s queen might just as well have been off the board.

Number Seven

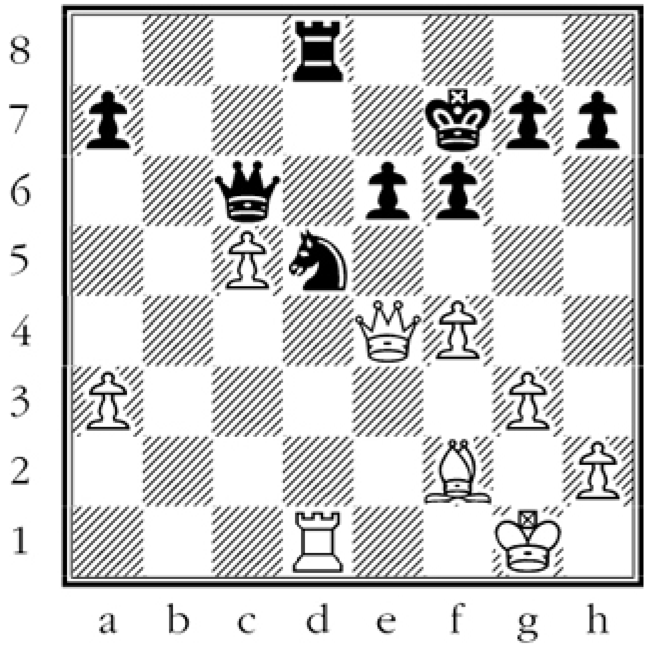
Failing to Guard against Captures

Few mistakes can be more costly in chess than failing to guard against captures. A capture is often the turning point of a game; it may involve gaining a decisive advantage in material or, in some cases, a vastly superior position.

Sometimes a capture is bound up with a sacrificial combination, in which a piece of great value is given up for one of slight value. Such captures are naturally difficult to foresee. Much more common are those situations in which a capture is quite obvious.

Why are such captures overlooked? Probably because they turn up in positions that seem simple and routine; the player’s alertness is lulled; he forgets that almost every position in chess has some element of attack and threat. Positions that are simple on the surface will often turn out, on careful scrutiny, to contain a fantastic wealth of intricate details. If you can acquire the faith that almost every chess position, no matter how simple, has its share of tactical possibilities, you are well on the way to overcoming any tendency to overlook captures.

In the next game, Black overlooks a deadly capture that checkmates him on the 13th move. “Who would have dreamt that it was possible?” is the wondering comment of most chessplayers. Well, the player who saw and executed this combination certainly dreamt it was possible. Whether he found the combination by logical reasoning or by a flash of “inspiration,” his example is one that we should imitate. (D)



White to move

Without bothering to look very deeply into the position, White snaps at a loose pawn. It is curious that he fails to see the crushing though obvious reply. This kind of slip often occurs in positions that look too “simple” to require careful appraisal and calculation.

1.Qxh7??

This blunder converts a probably drawn position into immediate loss for White.

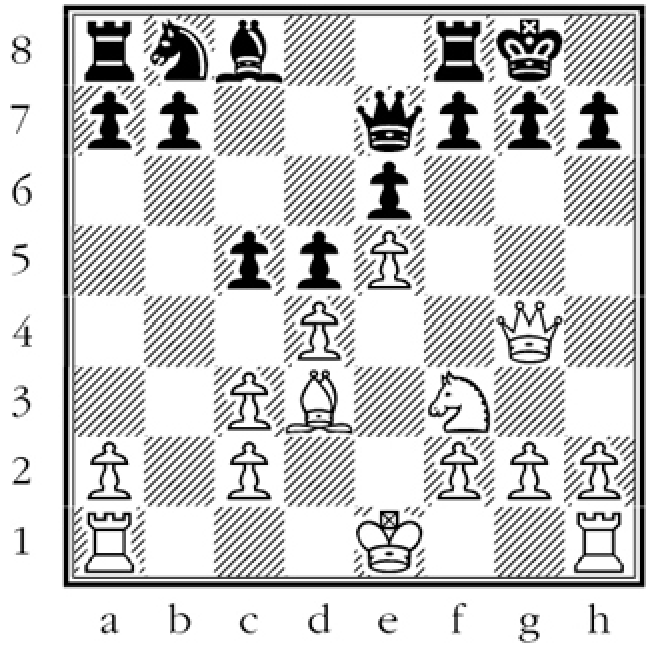
The chances are that White expected 1…Ne3? in reply. In that event, 2.Rxd8??? allows 2…Qg2#, while 2.Bxe3 is answered by 2…Rxd1+ winning the exchange. However, White has 2.Qh5+ Ke7 3.Bxe3 winning a piece.

But in reply to 1.Qxh7?? Black has a devastating alternative:

1…Nxf4!!

If now 2.Rxd8??? Qg2#. Or 2.gxf4 Rxd1+ and White loses his bishop as well.

After 1…Nxf4!!, White resigned. The real finesse of this move lies in the fact that it renders Qh5+ impossible for White, leaving him without a defense. (D)



Black to move

One of the queerest things that can happen in a game of chess is seen when a player actually provokes his opponent to make a capture that wins the game! Even forceful moves may have a drawback – on occasion they stimulate the other player to find an even more forceful reply.

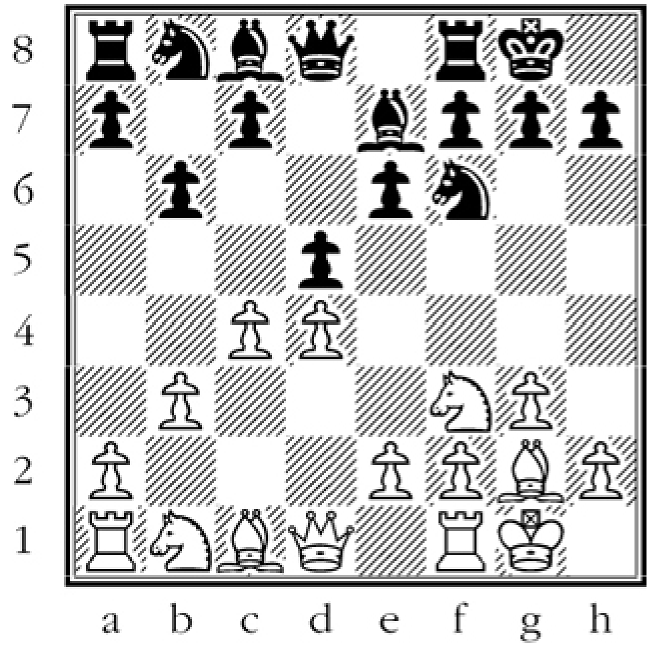
Black's uneasiness about the strong position of White's bishop is understandable. The bishop points at Black's castled position; in combination with White's queen and knight, the bishop may take part in a winning attack.

To ward off danger, Black should play 1…f5! as the best means of preventing Bxh7+ and gaining ground no matter how White replies. Instead, in his anxiety to be rid of the annoying bishop, Black plays: **1…c4?? 2.Bxh7+! Kxh7**

On 2…Kh8 3.Qh5 and Black is in a mating net.

3.Qh5+ Kg8 4.Ng5 Black resigns.

Black is helpless against the threat of Qh7#. If he tries 4…Re8 there follows 5.Qh7+ Kf8 6.Qh8#. Naturally 4…Qxg5 5.Qxg5 leaves Black with a decisive material advantage. (D)



Black to move

White’s fianchettoed bishop at g2 exerts strong pressure along the long diagonal. To neutralize this pressure to some extent, Black should play 1…Bb7. Instead, Black overlooks capture possibilities by a faulty move which further opens the long diagonal.

1…dxc4?? 2.Ne5!

Now White’s bishop at g2 strikes along the whole diagonal, threatening Bxa8. Poor Black cannot block the diagonal with 2…Nd5? for then 3.bxc4 wins a piece.

2…c6

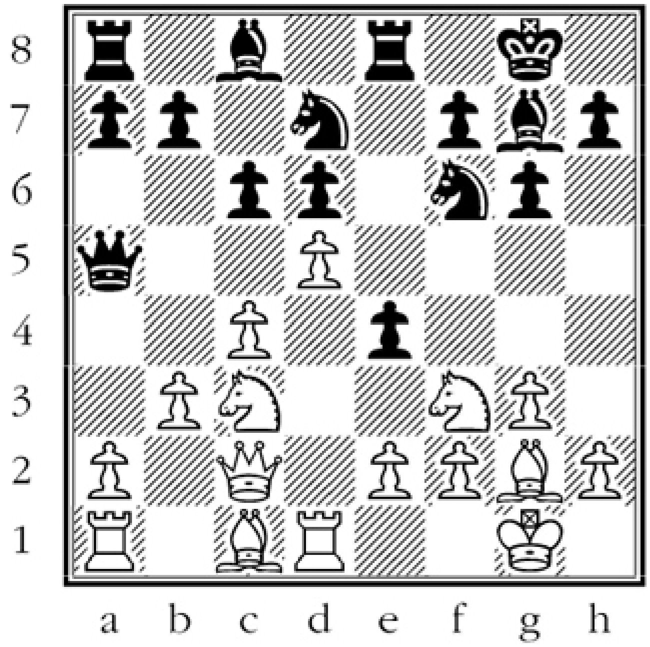
Forced. Black expects 3.Nxc6 Nxc6 4.Bxc6 Rb8 5.bxc4 and White has won “only” a pawn. But White has another capturing possibility, totally unforeseen by Black.

3.Bxc6!!

A paradox – who would expect White to part with the mighty bishop? The reply is forced.

3…Nxc6 4.Nxc6 Qc7 5.Nxe7+ Qxe7 6.Ba3!

This explains the “mysterious” capture on move 3. Black’s queen must give way, allowing the loss of the exchange by 7.Bxf8, after which White has an easy win based on his advantage in material. (D)



White to move

Some positions have “danger signals” to warn us. Here is such a position. White’s knight at f3 is *en prise*. Also the loose position of White’s knight on c3 may lead to trouble, in view of the powerful thrust of Black’s bishop at g7 along the long diagonal. Can you see why?

White’s immediate problem is what to do about his attacked knight at f3. Moving the menaced knight requires careful analysis. Thus if 1.Ng5 Nxd5! 2.cxd5 (or 2.Nxd5 Bxa1) 2…Qxc3. The right move is 1.Nd4!, salvaging one knight from attack and *closing the long diagonal* so that the other knight is no longer menaced. If then 1…cxd5 2.cxd5 Nxd5 3.Nxe4 and Black’s weak d-pawn must fall.

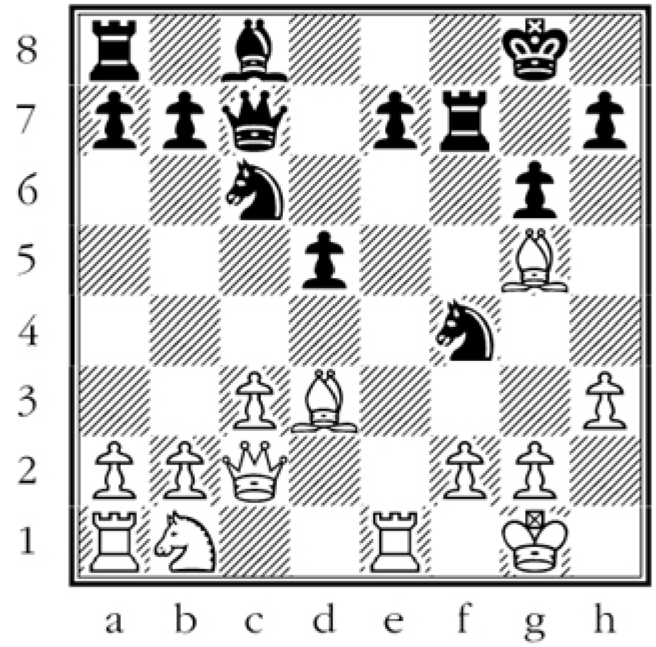
Unfortunately for White, he misses this resource and decides on counterattack. Such a policy is always risky, for some hidden possibility may spoil your calculations.

1.dxc6? exf3 2.cxd7

Anticipating capture by 2…Bxd7 3.Bxf3 etc.

2…Nxd7!!

The capture that White overlooked! It unmasks the bishop on the long diagonal, leaving two white pieces attacked. One of them must be lost. (D)



White to move

White has a double problem here. He has weakened his kingside with the advance of his h-pawn, and he must therefore be on the alert against any threats on that wing. His other difficulty is that his development has been haphazard and ineffectual.

White would do well to remove Black’s aggressively posted knight at f4. Instead, he decides on what he thinks is a judicious retreat.

1.Bf1?

This “prudent” move, played to give the kingside additional protection, actually leads to disaster; for now White’s queen is no longer protected.

1…Nxh3+!

Taking admirable advantage of the weakness of White’s castled pawn formation.

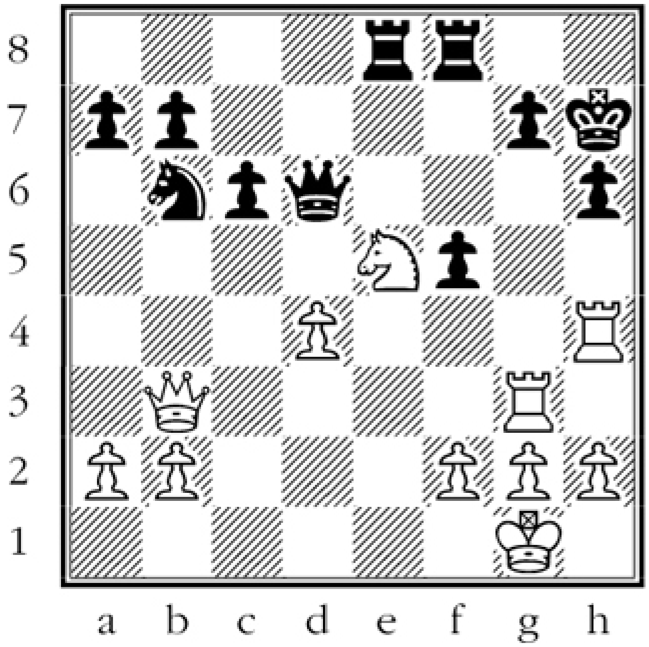
White must capture the intruder.

2.gxh3 Nd4!

Now the other knight becomes troublesome. White cannot play 3.cxd4?? because his queen is unguarded. (This is the consequence of 1.Bf1?.) **3.Qd3 Nf3+**

Black has a field day on the smashed-up kingside. White cannot move his king, for this allows 4…Qh2#. Therefore, White must give up his queen, suffering a decisive loss of material.

4.Qxf3 Rxf3 White resigns. (D)



Black to move

The essential point about this position is that as long as the queens remain on the board, White has attacking chances; if the queens are removed, Black reasons, White will have a lost endgame because of the awkward position of his rooks. Black is therefore unduly eager to bring about the exchange of queens.

While it is true that White's rooks would be badly posted in an endgame, they are placed very effectively for attacking purposes in the above position. Black completely misses the point by offering the exchange of queens with: **1…Qd5??**

Theoretically, this may seem an excellent move. In actual fact, it loses on the spot.

2.Rxg7+! Kxg7 3.Qg3+ Kf6

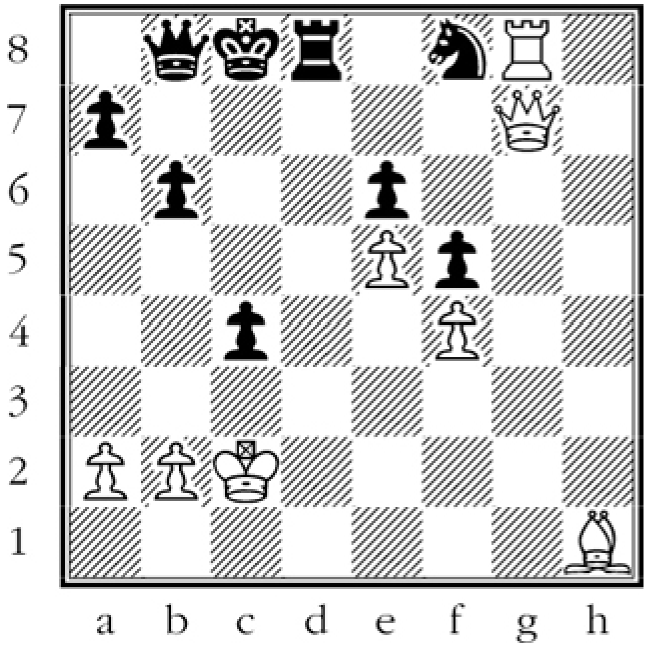
If 3…Kh7 4.Qg6+ forces mate. (This explains why Black's queen was needed at d6.)

4.Rxh6+ Ke7 5.Qg5+ Black resigns.

White mates next move.

In the diagramed position, Black should first have consolidated his position with some such move as 1…Rf6 before offering the exchange of queens.

Countless games have been lost in just this way – overlooking some small but vital tactical detail. (D)



Black to move

Tactical oversights sometimes come about because a player is so preoccupied with long-range problems that he misses the down-to-earth capturing possibilities that must be watched for from move to move. This kind of absent-mindedness brings about Black's downfall here.

Though a pawn ahead, Black is definitely on the defensive. White's queen, rook, and bishop all exert powerful pressure, while Black's pieces can barely find a square to move to.

Black's immediate problem is to do something about his doubly attacked knight. Unfortunately, if 1…Nd7 2.Qg5! leaves Black without a good move* – 2…Qc7? 3.Bb7+! or 2…Rxg8 3.Qxg8+ Kc7 4.Qxe6 and wins.

To solve the problem, Black hits on a finesse:

1…Qc7?

This move – so Black thinks – guards his knight indirectly, for if 2.Rxf8? Qxg7 etc. But White has another capture which Black overlooked: **2.Qxf8! Rxf8 3.Rxf8+ Kd7 4.Rf7+ Black resigns.**

For Black loses his queen and remains a clear piece down.

Overlooking a Capture that leads to Checkmate!

Blackmar-Diemer Gambit

White – Black

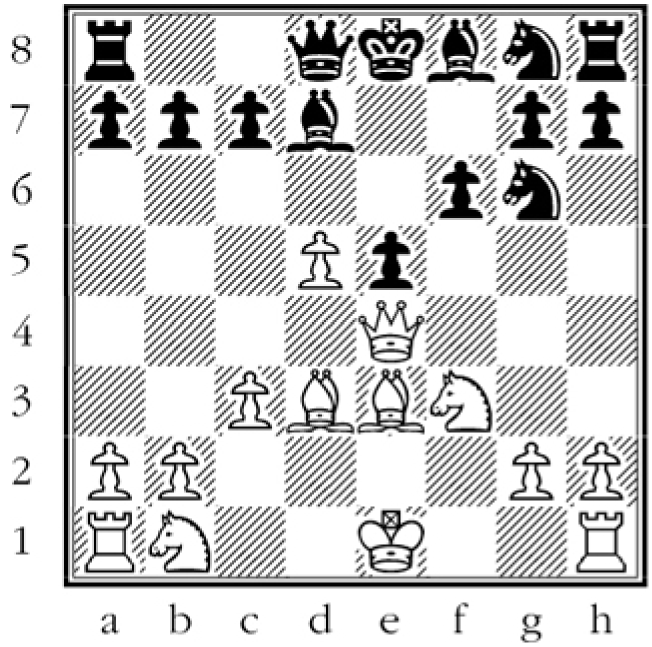
1.d4 d5 2.e4!? dxe4 3.f3 exf3 4.Nxf3

White has offered a pawn in the hope of getting a big lead in development. With careful play, Black has nothing to fear.

4…Bg4 5.Be3 Nc6 6.c3 e5

After this optimistic reply Black's pieces are driven back. He gets an easier game with 6…e6.

7.d5 Nce7 8.Qa4+ Bd7 9.Qe4 f6 10.Bd3 Ng6?? (D)



Black's last move is plausible, and yet it allows a forced mate!

11.Qxg6+!! hxg6 12.Bxg6+ Ke7 13.Bc5#!

How did this catastrophe come about? Naturally, Black did not dream that the queen sacrifice was possible. What features of the position might have helped him to see danger ahead?

Firstly, Black's king is in the center, where, as we know, he is vulnerable. Secondly, the development of his pieces has become tangled up, so that the king can expect no help from his own forces. Finally, Black has advanced his f-pawn, which opens up a line of approach for White's pieces.

All these factors create danger for Black – but they need not necessarily be fatal. If Black is aware of the difficulty, he will be careful in selecting a knight move. For example, 10…Nf5 is quite safe and provides relief for the cramped state of Black’s pieces. It is the careless 10…Ng6??, played without understanding of the position, that leads to a catastrophe.

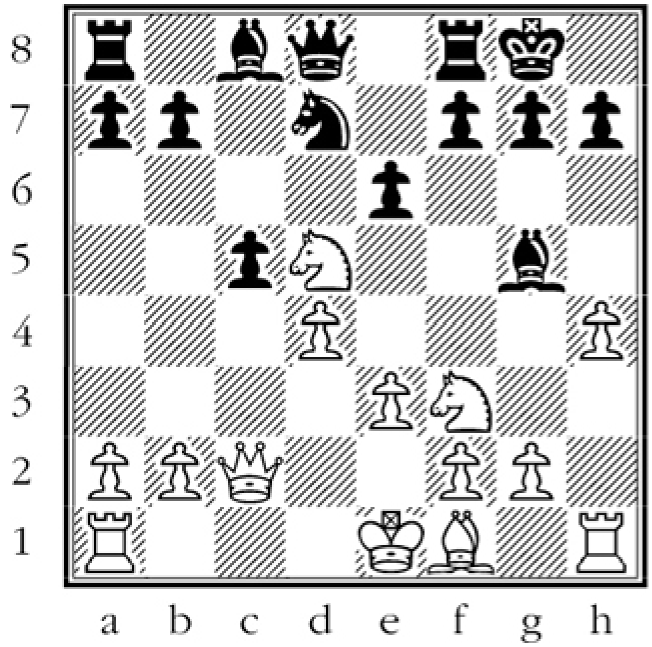
Number Eight

Underestimating your Opponent’s Threats

Threats are harder to see than captures. Some moves threaten checkmate, some threaten captures, some involve a general improvement in position. Some threats are crude, brutal, obvious. Others are unbelievably subtle in their intentions, refined in their execution. Some threats are sound and directed toward winning the game. Others are based on a foolish idea and will prove disastrous for the player who has devised them. Some threats are irresistible, others can be topped by a stronger threat.

In a game between good players, threats and counterthreats are essentially a matter of interplay of ideas and intentions. If each player does not always see through his opponent’s threats, he is at least prepared for them. Thus, as in the case of captures, it is important to realize that threats are always possible, *that they must be looked for.*

That is why threats are most dangerous when they are devised by an opponent who seems to have a lost game. When victory seems within your grasp is just the time when you are most likely to underestimate the other player’s resources. “Simple” positions, too, are the downfall of many a player who feels that the game no longer requires careful scrutiny. Overconfidence is unquestionably the quality that leads many players to overlook their opponent’s threats. (D)



Black to move

All that Black sees in this position is that one of his bishops is attacked, and that he can capture the advanced white knight if he wishes. Yet White threatens one of the most startling brilliancies ever played on the chessboard. Can you see White's threat and how to meet it?

But Black is blind to the explosive possibilities in the position and plays:

1…Qa5+??

Black's safest course is 1…Be7 avoiding the opening of the h-file and also guarding his c-pawn.

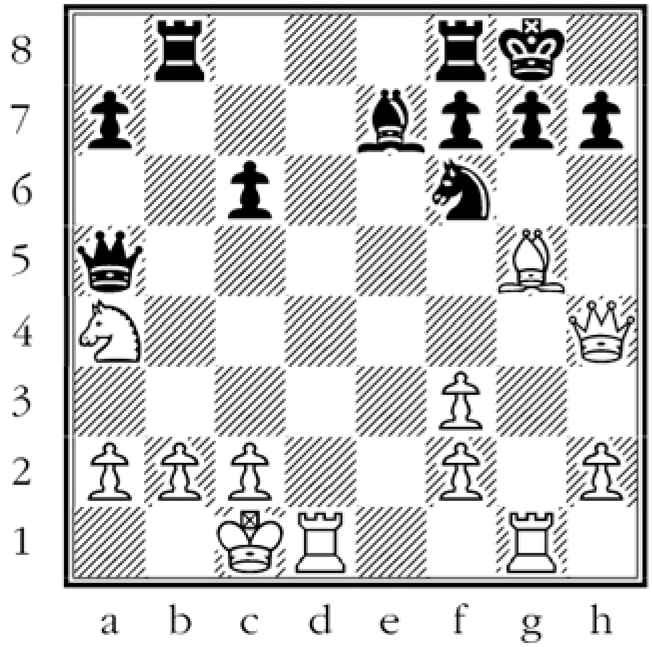
2.b4!!

After this Black can avoid mate only by losing his queen!

2…cxb4 3.Qxh7+!!!

This was White's hidden threat.

3…Kxh7 4.hxg5+ Kg6 5.Ne7# (D)



Black to move

Black is well aware that the open g-file may be dangerous for his king. But he feels he has adequate counterattacking chances on the open b-file. He is carried away by the idea of playing …Rb4. This move, he believes, will win a piece for him. He is wrong!

1…Rb4?

Now White has to have his wits about him; merely retreating his attacked queen loses the knight.

2.Bxf6!! Rxh4 3.Rxg7+ Kh8

Black saw this far ahead, and he is well satisfied. He expects 4.Rg5+ Bxf6 5.Rxa5 Rxh2 etc.

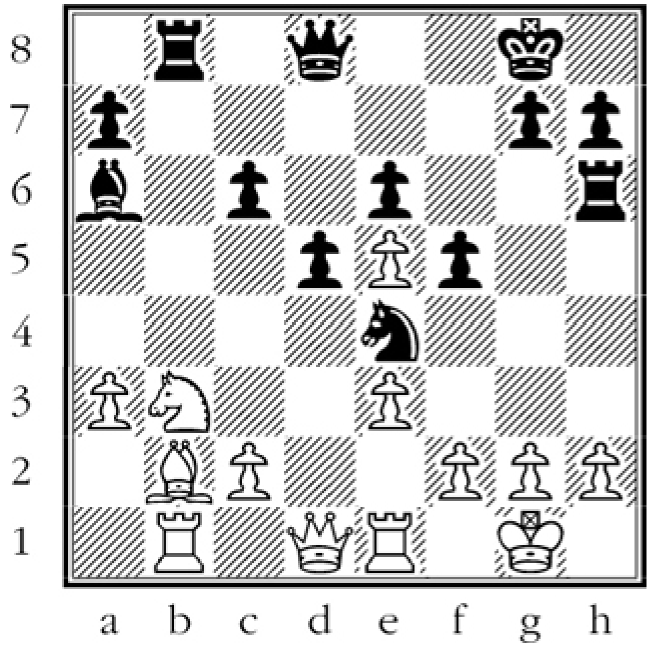
But White has an extraordinary continuation:

4.Rg8++!!!

Who can blame Black for overlooking the threat of White's not even bothering to win the black queen – but sacrificing a rook as well?!

4…Kxg8 5.Rg1+ Rg4 6.Rxg4+ Qg5+ 7.Rxg5#

Black went wrong by ignoring the threat of the open g-file. The cautious 1…Kh8! would have neutralized the attack and maintained his counterattack as well. (D)



White to move

Black has a powerful attacking position. His bishop has a sweeping diagonal; his knight is strongly centralized; both rooks are on open files; there is a devastating threat of …Qh4, with the murderous double threat of …Qxh2# or …Qxf2+ and …Ng3#. How is White to defend himself?

To meet the threat of …Qh4, White chooses the most obvious method – a line that is absolutely ruinous!

1.g3??

Thus he prevents …Qh4 – or so he thinks. But this purely mechanical move fails to provide against the formidable concentration of Black's forces against White's king.

The move Black chooses in reply seems fantastic, but only on the surface. Actually it is quite logical because it is based on the activity of the other black pieces.

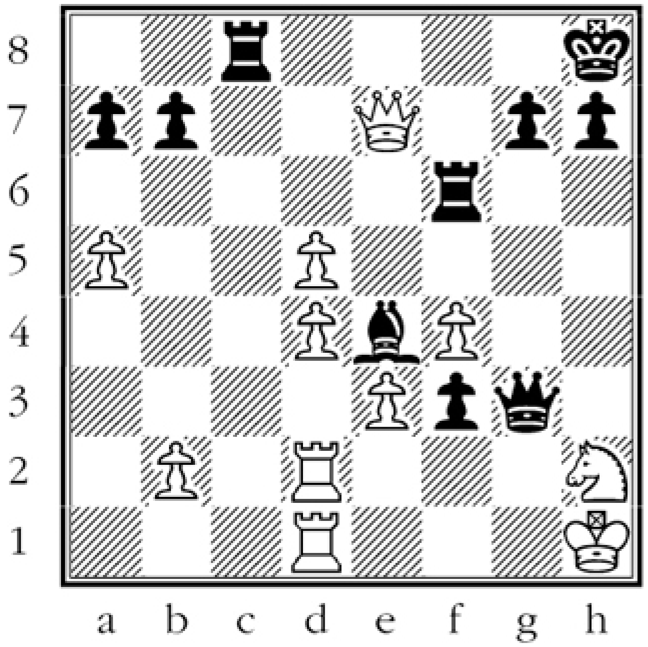
1…Qh4!!!

Now Black threatens 2…Qxh2#!.

How is White to defend himself? If he tries 2.gxh4, then 2…Rg6+ 3.Qg4 Rxg4+ 4.Kh1 Nxf2#.

So, after 1…Qh4!!! White resigns!

Now go back to the diagram. White could have countered the threat with 1.Qf3. Then if 1…Qh4 2.h3 and White is secure – at least for a while. (D)



Black to move

White has just played 1.Qe7, satisfied that by threatening Qxe4 he wards off the terrible threat of …f2+. Note that White is not afraid of …Bxd5 (renewing the threat); for then he can play e3-e4, blocking out the bishop. Nevertheless, White overlooks still another threat at Black's disposal.

1…Qe1+!!

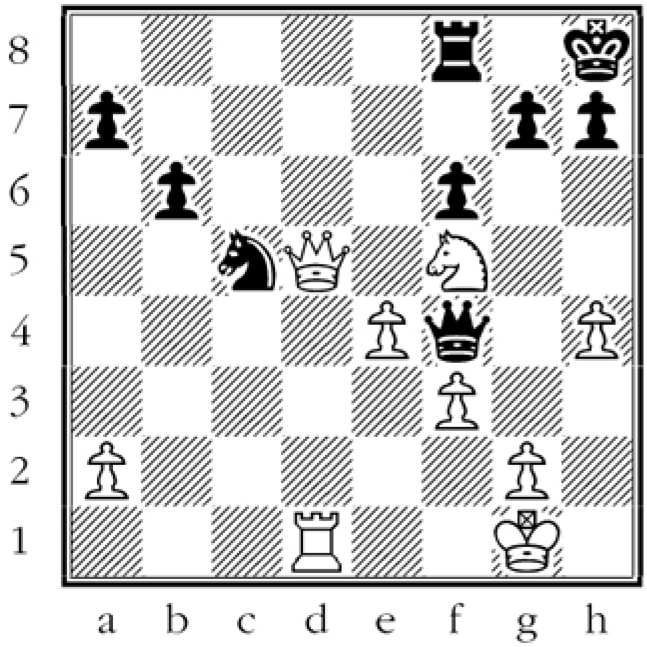
Who can blame White for not seeing this move, which looks utterly nonsensical?

And yet capturing the queen loses very quickly, as you will see. Therefore White considers what happens if he fails to capture the queen.

For example, 2.Nf1 Rh6+ 3.Rh2 (or 3.Kg1 f2+ 4.Rxf2 Rh1#) 3…Qf2!!, and White is comically helpless against the coming 4…Qg2#. (the rook at h2 is pinned!) **2.Rxe1 f2+! 3.Qxe4 fxe1Q+ 4.Kg2 Qxd2+ White resigns.**

Hopelessly behind in material, White has nothing to play for.

Black's inspired queen sacrifice is an example of chess imagination at its very finest. White provided against the immediate discovered check, but he failed to realize that Black's sly postponement of the discovered check could actually increase its power enormously. (D)



Black to move

Can you see what White is threatening? Black misses it completely, because he ignores his weakness on the first rank. How can Black make his position reasonably safe?

Black sees a chance to win White's h-pawn. Without stopping to look any further than this shallow possibility, he plays: **1…g6??**

With 1…Qc7 Black could have parried White's threat.

2.Qf7!!

Threatens 3.Qxf8# or 3.Qg7#.

2…Ne6

If 2…Rxf7 3.Rd8+ with mate next move.

3.Rd8!!

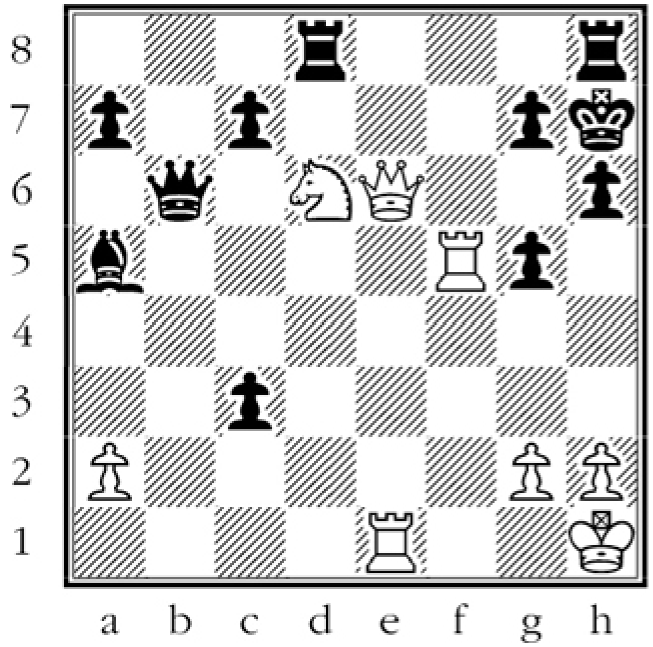
This dazzling stroke is much more forcing than 3.Qxe6 gxf5 – which leads to nothing for White.

3…Qc1+

Desperation. If 3…Nxd8 4.Qxf8# or 4.Qg7#. If 3…Rxd8 4.Qxf6+ Kg8 5.Ne7#!.

4.Kh2 Qf4+ 5.Kh3 Black resigns.

Black cannot capture the white decoy rook. Meanwhile he is helpless against a variety of mating threats, the most brilliant being 6.Qg7+!! Nxg7 7.Rxf8#. White's queen was diabolically active; *Black's queen did nothing for the defense.* (D)



White to move

White appears to have a lost game. He cannot move his knight – for example, 1.Nc4?? Qxe6 2.Rxe6 Rd1+ forces mate. Yet White deliberately played for this position, relying on a winning threat that Black has completely overlooked. What is White's resource that Black missed?

One can hardly blame Black for not foreseeing the line of play by which White forces victory. Even the crippled knight plays a part!

1.Rf6!!

Threatens 2.Rxh6+ gxh6 3.Qf7#.

1…Rhf8

If 1…gxf6 2.Qf7#.

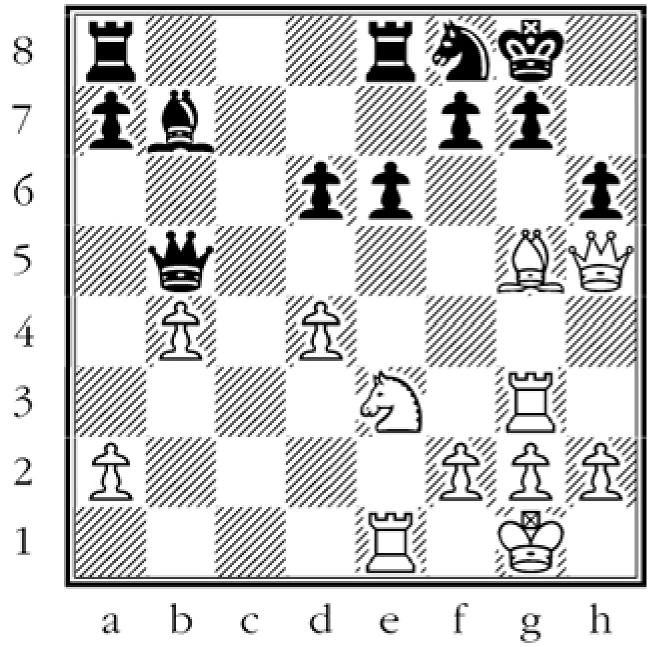
2.Qf5+ Kg8 3.Rxf8+ Rxf8 4.Qxf8+!!

The second point of White's magnificent plan.

4…Kxf8 5.Re8#!

Beautiful play indeed; yet, can we completely excuse Black for failing to see White's subtle resource?

Take another look at the diagrammed position. What hint is there of things to come? Note that Black's forces are badly split, with his queen and bishop practically out of play. When you study the situation carefully, you see that the black king must really fend for himself, and can get little assistance from his forces. These factors are the key to Black's defeat. (D)



White to move

Black has just played …h6, under the impression that this wins White’s bishop. This reasoning seems convincing, as a move of the menaced bishop will lose the white queen. How does White’s aggressively posted rook at g3 spoil this plausible plan?

1.Bf6!!

This is the spectacular threat that Black has completely overlooked.

1…Qxh5

Black must capture, as his queen is unguarded.

2.Rxg7+ Kh8 3.Rxf7+ Kg8 4.Rg7+ Kh8 5.Rxb7+ Kg8

These “windmill” moves are amusing – but not for Black!

6.Rg7+ Kh8

The time has come for Black to win back the queen.

7.Rg5+ Kh7 8.Rxh5 Kg6

A slight consolation for Black – he regains the lost piece.

9.Rh3 Kxf6 10.Rxh6+ Black resigns.

With three pawns down, Black has nothing to play for.

Black is Shown the Threat – and Misses It!

Petroff’s Defense

White – Black

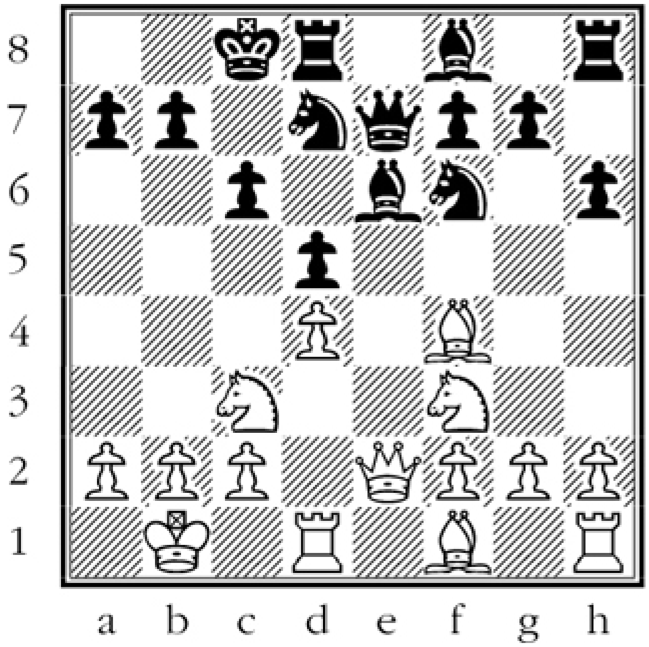
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 d6 4.Nf3 Nxe4 5.Qe2 Qe7 6.d3 Nf6 7.Bg5 Be6 8.Nc3 Nbd7

Since neither player can develop his king bishop both are likely to castle queenside.

9.d4 d5 10.0-0-0 c6

Not good. Since he will probably castle on the queenside, the pawn weakness will endanger Black's castled position.

11.Kb1 h6 12.Bf4! 0-0-0 (D)



13.Qa6!!

This unwelcome intrusion was made possible by Black's weakening 10th move. If now 13…bxa6?? 14.Bxa6#!.

The fact that Black does not capture the queen indicates that he sees through this variation. This in turn should give him the key to White's threat – but it doesn't!

13…Nh5??

Best was 13…Qb4, countering the threat by preventing the sacrifice which follows.

14.Qxc6+!!! bxc6 15.Ba6#!

Another example of the weakening effect of a pawn advance on the castled position.

Number Nine

Losing a Won Game

Of all the different kinds of mistakes in chess, losing a won game is undoubtedly the most exasperating. No other mistake is more likely to rob you of self-confidence.

What do we mean by a “won game”? When you have a demonstrable mate, a sizeable material advantage, a decisive attack, you have a won game. Some advantages are clearer than others; for example, a forced “mate in three” brooks no argument, whereas the advantage of a piece ahead may allow the losing side to play on for a long time.

The ways in which players lose won games can be grouped under a fairly small number of types. Some, when they have an advantage in material, seek complications instead of exchanging remorselessly. As the game simplifies, the excess of material becomes more telling; contrariwise, obscure complications give the prospective loser a chance to turn the tables and befuddle his opponent.

Faulty execution of a winning combination has lost many a game on the very brink of victory. In such cases a player sees the winning idea, plays the winning sacrifice, and then inverts the order of his follow-up moves or misses the really clinching point of his combination.

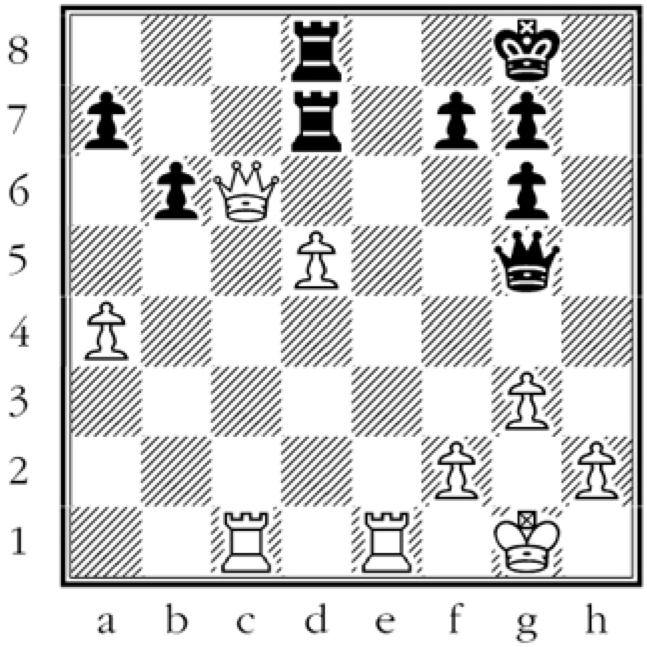
A fault shared by many players is the habit of drifting aimlessly once they have achieved a winning position. Like the man who can’t bring himself to say goodbye, they dawdle and delay, seemingly unable to bring the game to a successful conclusion. Even great masters have suffered from this affliction.

Closely related to this psychological handicap is the notion that once a player has achieved a decisive advantage – winning a rook, for example – he can relax, take it easy, and let nature take its course. This often turns out disastrously, especially against an opponent who is determined and resourceful.

Quite different, but equally unsuccessful, is the player who gives way to despair all too soon. He may even go so far as to resign in a position where he has a quick forced mate!

Most of the faults that turn a won game into a lost one are really aspects of character and temperament. Post-mortem analysis shows us what went wrong in the last game, but does not tell us what to do in the next game. To acquire this ability to win won games consistently, you must train yourself to play with determination, to play at all times the best chess of which you are capable, and to give equal care to every type of position.

It will help you to remember that every player has the shattering experience of losing a won game. Every great player owes a good deal of his success to his ability to apply himself to all types of position; and even the best players have their lapses from time to time. (D)



White to move

At first sight, we get the impression that White is in a bad way. His vulnerable d-pawn, attacked three times, must go lost. Yet White has deliberately aimed for this position! He senses a weakness of Black's first rank – despite the black king's "loophole" at h7.

1.Qxd7!!

An amazing resource which should win quickly.

1…Rxd7

White has a forced win – *if he plays the right move.*

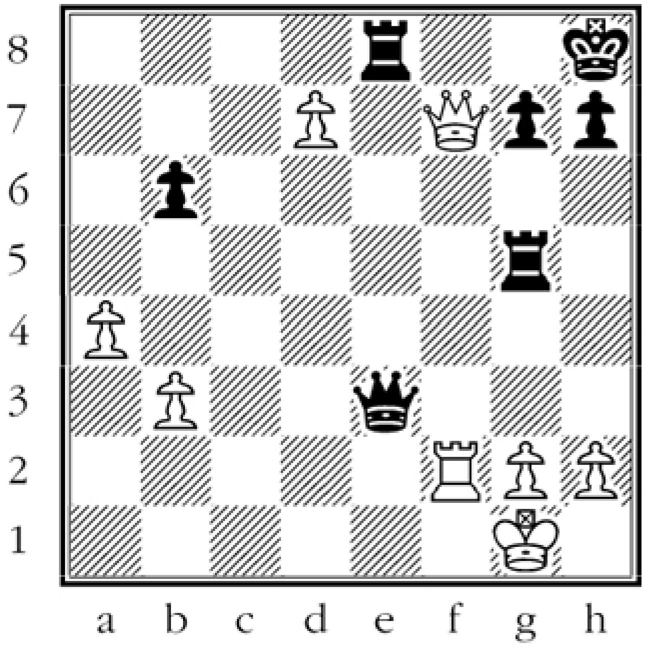
2.Rc8+??

But this is *not* the right move. Black has a winning defense.

2…Rd8 White resigns.

White is left with a rook for the queen – a hopeless disadvantage. Now let us retrace our steps and see where White went wrong. Start from the diagramed position: **2.Re8+! Kh7 3.Rcc8**

To stop Rh8#, Black must submit to ruinous loss of material – for example 3…Rd8 4.Rexd8 Qxd8 5.Rxd8 and White has an overwhelming advantage in material. (D)



Black to move

A rook up, Black nevertheless finds White's far advanced d-pawn a troublesome enemy to contend with. However, by playing the careful 1…Rd8, Black can consolidate his position and eventually win the game. Note that after 1…Rd8 the reply 2.Qf8+?? would be faulty, for after 2…Rxf8 White would find to his horror that the contemplated 3.Rxf8# is impossible – his rook is pinned at f2!

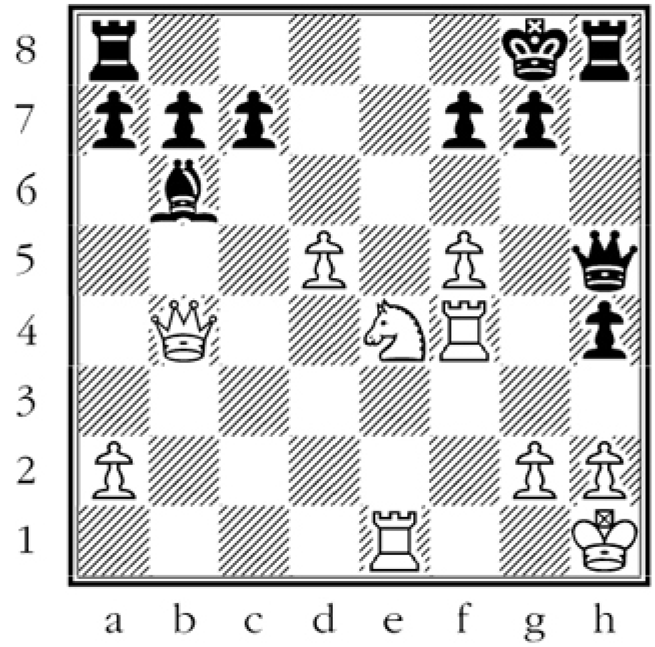
In the actual game, however, Black's move in the diagramed position was:

1…Rg8??

After this disastrous blunder, White can force checkmate by 2.Qxg8+! Kxg8 3.d8Q+ Qe8 4.Qxe8#.

But White did not play this line. Instead, he *resigned!*

Such misjudgments of position are all too frequent. Once White saw that he could not force checkmate after 1…Rd8, he completely lost heart and did not even bother to look for the obvious checkmate available after 1…Rg8. (D)



Black to move

After winning a pawn in the opening Black has been playing a patient defensive game and trying to get his harried king to a place of refuge. He must now meet the threat of 1.Nf6+! gxf6 2.Rg4+ Kh7 3.Rxh4 winning his queen. What is Black's best continuation of his skillful defense?

Black can meet the threat of Nf6+ and at the same time get some much-needed development by playing 1…Rh6. In that case he remains a pawn to the good and has little to fear, as his king is safe from attack.

1…f6?

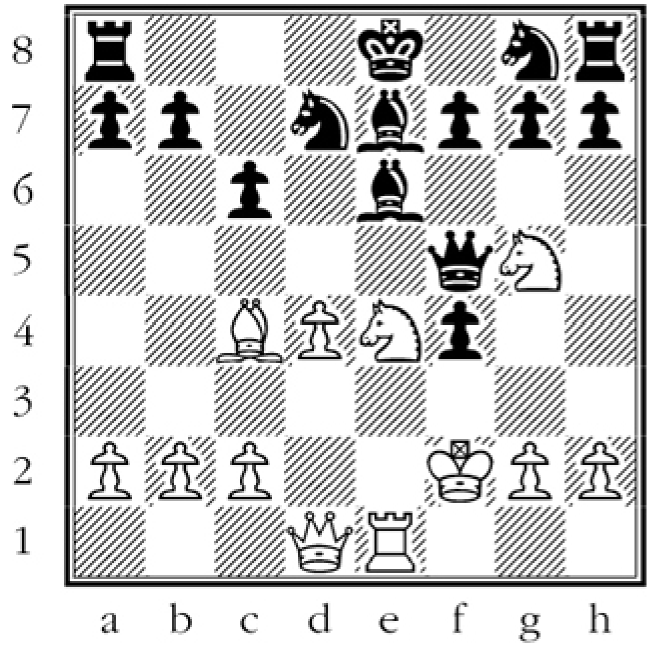
A double mistake: he fails to get the king rook into the game, and he does not parry White's threat.

2.Nxf6+! gxf6 3.Rg4+ Qxg4

The loss of the queen is unavoidable, for if 3…Kf7? 4.Qe7#. Or if 3…Kh7 4.Qe7+ and mate soon follows.

4.Qxg4+ Kf8 5.Re6 Rh6 6.Qf4! Kg7 7.Re7+ Kf8 8.Qxh6+ Kxe7 9.Qg7+ Black resigns.

For after 9…Kd6 10.Qxf6+ White's passed pawns assure him an easy win. (D)



White to move

Black has received the odds of queen rook. White is so far behind in material that he sees his only hope of victory in a complicated line of play that will befuddle his weak opponent. This explains White's next move, which, unsound as it is, gives Black several ways to go wrong.

1.Nxf7

It is not easy for Black to find the right reply to this surprising move.

Thus if 1…Bxf7?? 2.Nd6+ winning Black's queen because Black's bishop is pinned.*

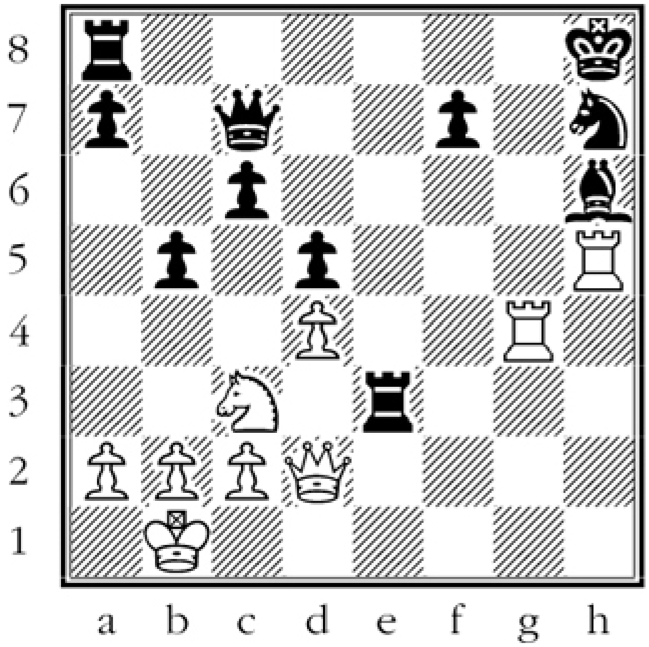
Or if 1…Kxf7 2.Bxe6+ Qxe6 3.Ng5+ Bxg5 4.Rxe6 Kxe6 5.Qg4+ winning either Black's bishop on g5 or his knight on d7. The resulting position would be lost for Black because of the exposed position of his king.*

The right way is 1…Qxf7 2.Nd6+ Bxd6 3.Bxe6 Qf6 and Black has nothing to fear from any discovered check by White's bishop on e6. With his enormous material advantage, Black would win without much trouble.

Bewildered by the complications, Black plays:

1…Ngf6?? 2.Nfd6+ Kf8 3.Nxf5

And White wins easily.* (D)



Black to move

With a piece ahead, Black is quite confident of winning. His confidence is justified, but caution is indicated too. Black's problem is that his bishop is attacked, and his bishop in turn guards his rook at e3. The proper course is 1…Qd6 followed by …Re6 and all is well.

With ordinary care, Black's material advantage will yield him an easy win.* Certainly there is little point in his embarking on risky tactical complications.

Actually it is White who needs the tactical complications. Why? Being substantially behind in material, he stands to lose if the game continues placidly. Therefore a policy of "mixing it" is psychologically favorable for White.

It is Black's misfortune that he sees a move which he thinks is a "killer." Here it is:

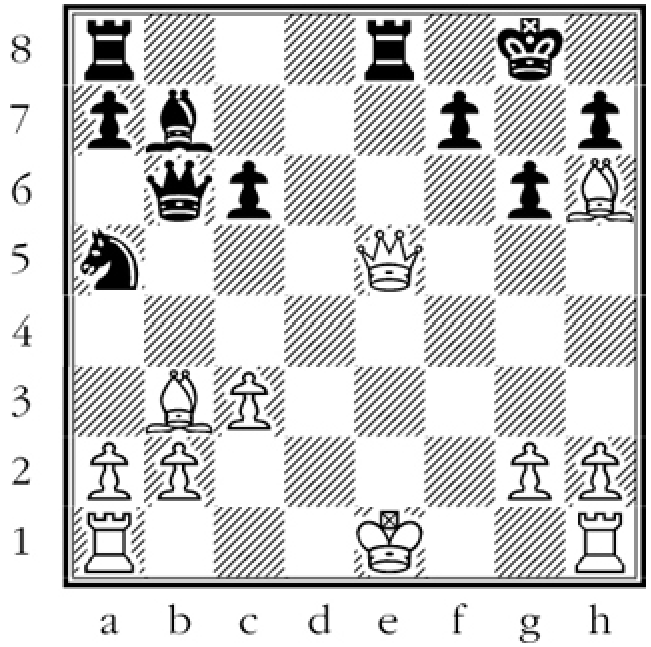
1…Re4?

Deliberately offering the bishop. Now if 2.Qxh6?? Re1+ wins the queen. Or if 2.Rxh6?? Rxg4 and Black is a rook ahead.

So far, so good; but White has still another move which Black has completely overlooked.

2.Nxe4!! Bxd2 3.Nf6! Black resigns.

Black has no way of meeting the menace of Rxh7#. His foolish search for complications has lost a won game. (D)



White to move

Though White threatens Qg7#, he cannot carry out his threat because of the pin on the e-file which wins his queen. In the actual game, White was so depressed that he *resigned.* Had he been alert, he would have found a way to force victory in this desperate-looking situation. How?

1.Bxf7+!

This looks like a "spite check" – the last gasp before resigning.

1…Kxf7

Forced – not that Black seems to have anything to worry about, as he still maintains the pin.

2.Rf1+ Kg8

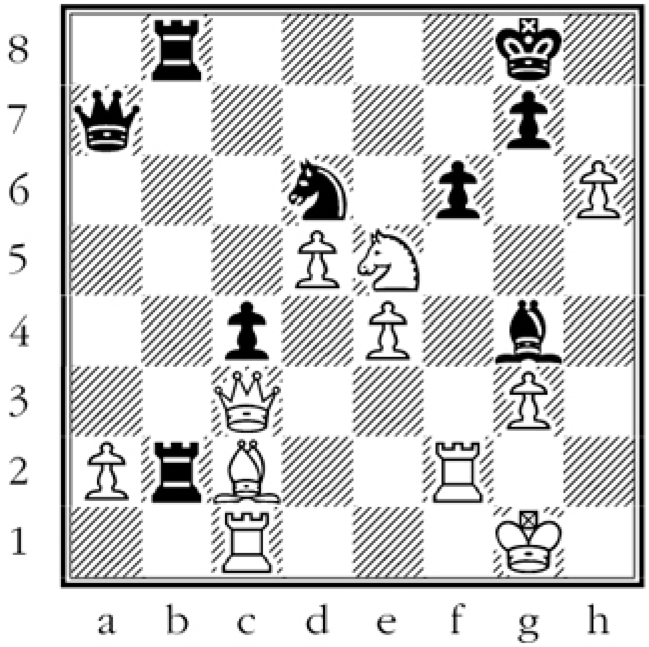
Again forced. But now White has run out of checks – or so it would seem.

3.Rf8+!!

Another spite check? No, much better than that – White forces Black to give up the pin on the queen. Result: White's mating threat comes to life.

3…Rxf8 4.Qg7#!

Remember, none of this happened! White resigned in the diagramed position, unaware that he had a checkmate within his grasp! (D)



Black to move

Black can win a piece for several pawns by 1…fxe5, remaining with a won game. Unfortunately, he sees a way to win the exchange. Without any attempt to check the soundness of the idea, Black plunges into his combination. Only two moves later, he finds that he is checkmated!

Instead of playing the simple winning move 1…fxe5, Black rushes into an “attractive” combination:

1…Qxf2+? 2.Kxf2 Nxe4+

The point of Black’s sacrifice. His knight cannot be captured, as White’s bishop is pinned by a black rook. Thus Black wins White’s queen by a forking check which attacks White’s king and queen at the same time.

3.Ke3 Nxc3

Now Black expects 4.Nxg4, leaving him with the material advantage of a rook for a bishop. But he is in for a disagreeable shock: **4.h7+! Kh8**

If 4…Kf8 5.h8Q+ and wins.

5.Nf7#!

The careful 1…fxe5 would have won for Black. The careless 1…Qxf2+? lost for him.

Book Three

How to Play the White Pieces

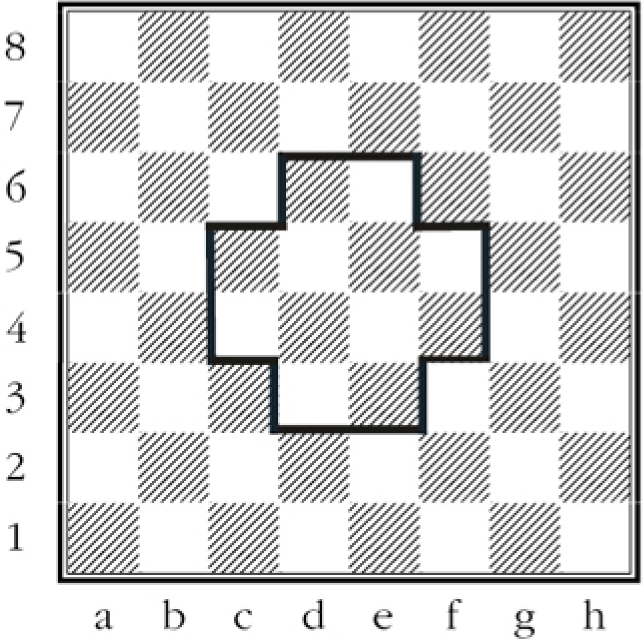
Chapter One

How to Control the Center

You are about to start playing a game of chess. The pieces and pawns are all set up in their proper opening positions. You are playing White. What is the basic thought that will guide you through the opening during the first few moves?

You know that it is important to bring out your pieces quickly and effectively. You have been told that it is a good idea to begin by moving one of your center pawns. You have been advised to control the center.

“Control the center” – that is the basic idea of opening play. But just what is the center? How do you control it? And why is it important to control it? (D)



1

The squares inside the heavy lines make up the center. The center, as you can see from Diagram 1, is made up of the squares e3, d3, f4, e4, d4, c4, f5, e5, d5, c5, e6, d6.

When you post (“centralize”) your pieces in the center, they have their greatest range and power. Once you play them to the center during the opening, they can be moved quickly to other sectors as the course of the game requires.

We often use the term “center” in a restricted sense, referring only to the inner four squares: e4, d4, e5, and d5. These are the most effective squares for center pawns. Why? Because the pawn at e4 or d4 prevents hostile pieces from establishing themselves at the center squares controlled by that pawn.

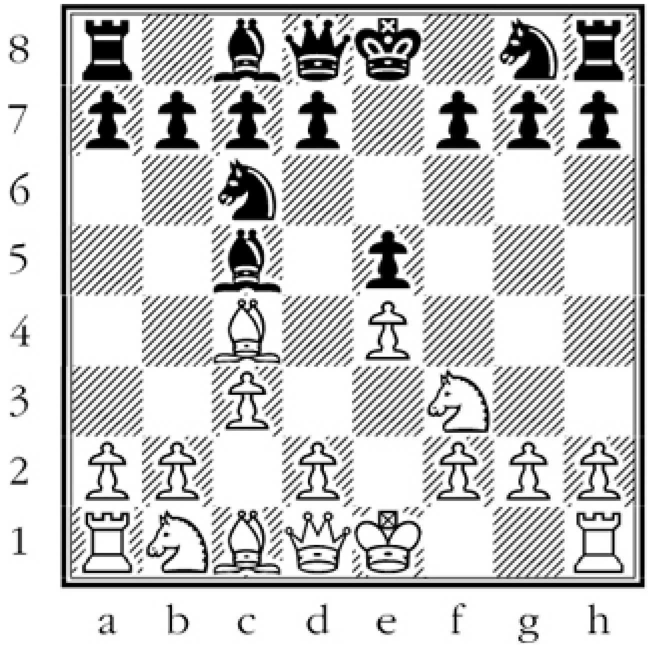
“Controlling the center,” then, means *posting your pawns and pieces in such a way that you have a decidedly more powerful grip on the center than your opponent has.*

White has the first move. Consequently his chance of controlling the center is a pretty good one. Now let us turn to some examples which show what you should do to Black if you get to control the center.

Giuoco Piano

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 (D)



2

White intends to form a broad pawn center with d2-d4.

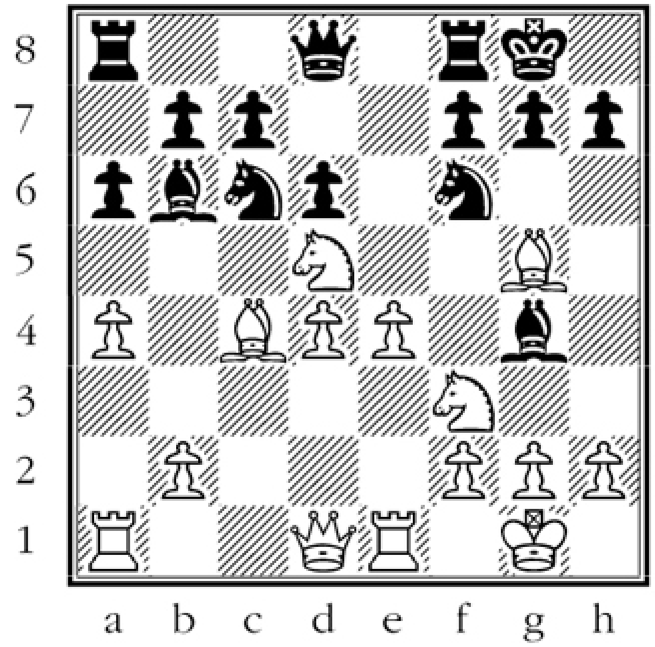
Black must fight for the center here by playing 4…Nf6, attacking White’s e-pawn. Then, after 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 Bb4+ 7.Bd2 Bxd2+ 8.Nbxd2 d5! Black has successfully achieved a foothold in the center.

Instead, Black loses his way in a clumsy line of play:

4…Qe7 5.d4 Bb6 6.0-0 Nf6 7.Re1 d6 8.a4 a6 9.Na3 Bg4 10.Nc2 0-0 11.Ne3!

White's powerful pawn center stifles Black's pieces and deprives them of adequate scope. (Note how effectively White's knight has reached the center by a roundabout route.) If now 11…Bh5 12.Nf5! drives back the black queen. And if 11…Bxf3 12.gxf3 exd4 13.Nf5! again drives back the queen. So Black's light-square bishop makes a sorry retreat all the way back.

11…Bc8 12.Nd5! Qd8 13.Bg5 exd4 14.cxd4 Bg4 (D)



3

Black desperately hopes to consolidate his position with …Bxd4.White's pin on Black's king knight threatens to rip up Black's kingside with fatal effect. In order to get the most out of the pin, White advances his e-pawn thus making use of his overwhelming pawn center: **15.e5! Bxf3 16.Qxf3! Nxd4 17.Qh3 dxe5 18.Bxf6 gxf6 19.Qh6 Black resigns.**

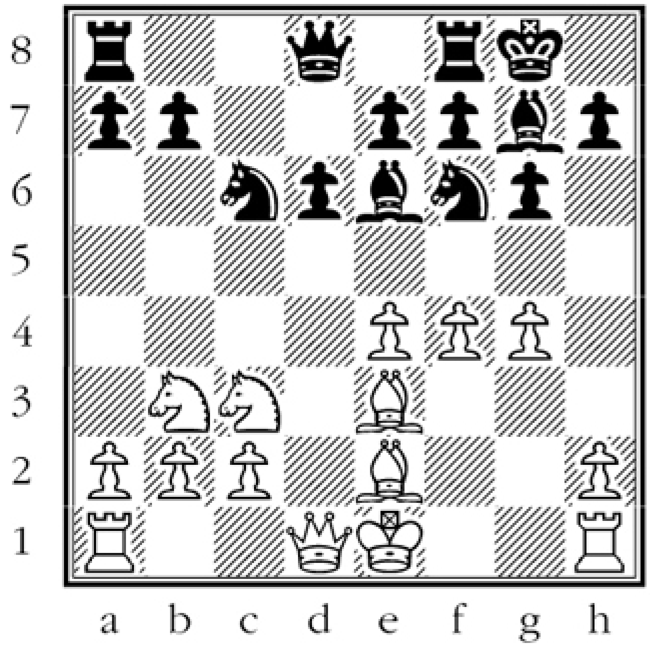
Black surrenders because after the coming 20.Nxf6+ he will have to give up his queen to stop checkmate.

White won this game by exploiting Black's failure to enforce a timely …d5, which would have given him a fair share of the center (See the first note.) In the next game, Black again neglects to fight for the center with …d5. White soon crushes him in an even more brutal manner.

Sicilian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.Be2 Bg7 7.Be3 0-0 8.f4 Nc6 9.Nb3 Be6 10.g4! (D)



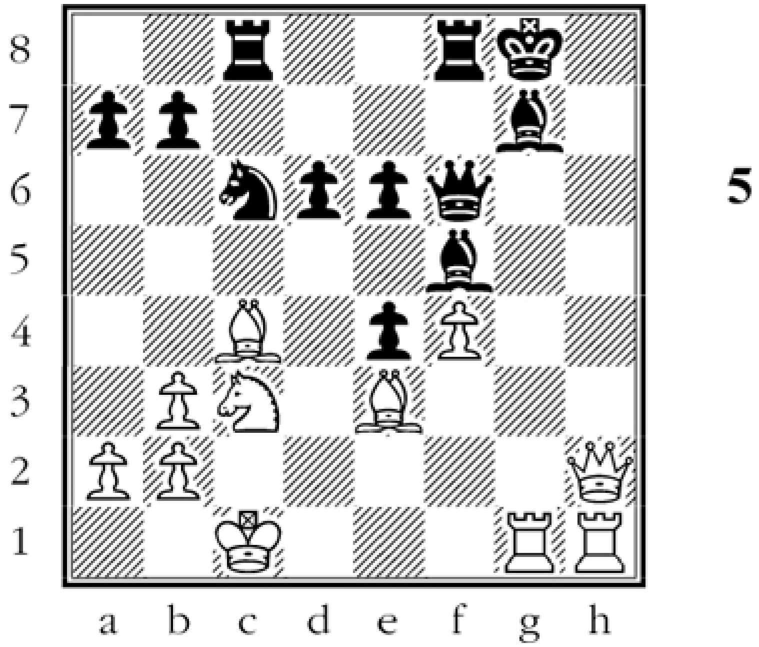
4

White will get an overwhelming position unless Black counters energetically with …d5!.

10…Nd7??

White can now start a savage pawn-storming attack which opens up lines of attack against Black's king. After 10…Nd7?? White is not hampered by any black counterplay.

11.h4! f5 12.h5! Nc5 13.hxg6 hxg6 14.gxf5 gxf5 15.Qd2! fxe4 16.0-0-0 Nxb3+ 17.cxb3 Rc8 18.Rdg1 Bf5 19.Bc4+ e6 20.Qh2! Qf6



(D)

White is ready for the final attack. White’s brilliant sacrifices make the most of his open lines.

21.Nd5!! exd5 22.Bxd5+ Be6 23.Bxe6+ Qxe6 24.Rxg7+! Kxg7 25.Qh7+ Kf6 26.Rh6#

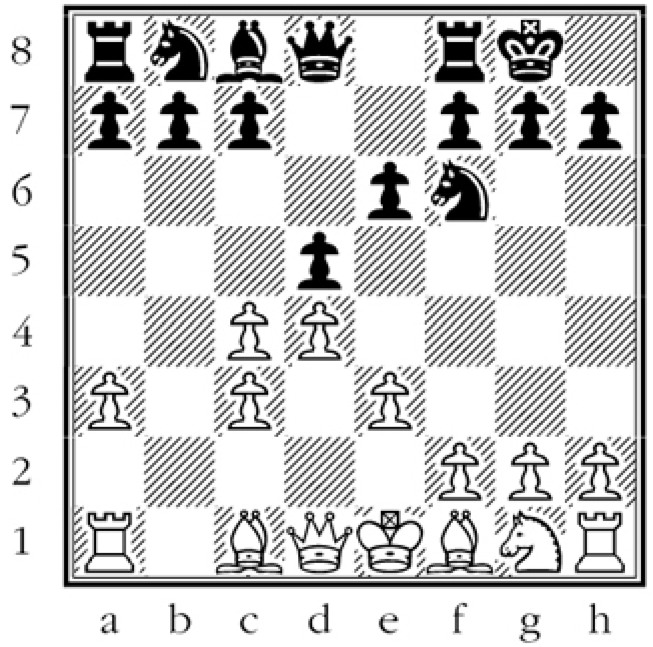
In this game we have seen how White punished Black for neglecting the center.

In the game that follows, White builds up an overwhelming center that is the keystone of a winning attacking formation. Black’s opening lapses contribute to the formation of this center.

Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 d5 5.a3 Bxc3+? 6.bxc3 0-0 (D)



6

White has the makings of a mighty center formation.

Thanks to Black’s faulty exchange on the fifth move, White has a pawn on c3. This pawn strengthens White’s center formation by giving additional protection to White’s d-pawn.

As a result of White’s fourth move, his e-pawn had the function of guarding White’s d-pawn. But now the e-pawn can disregard its defensive job. White therefore forms the plan of advancing e3-e4 (move 16!).

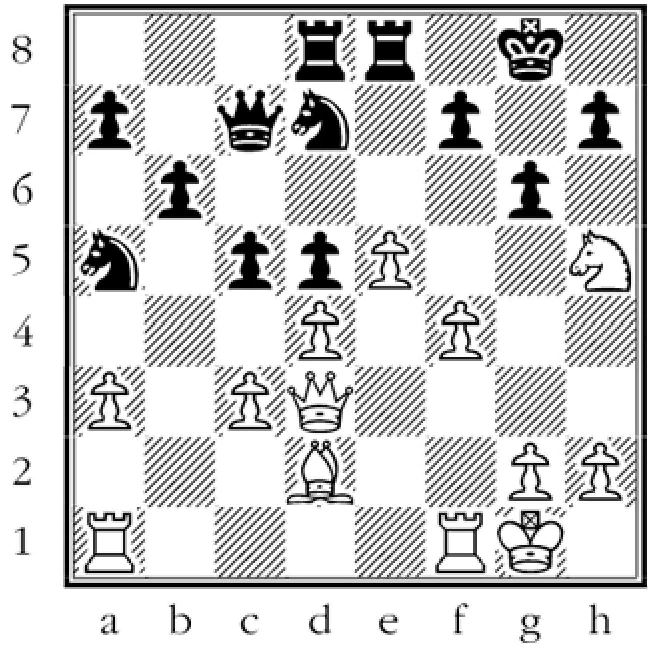
In order to play e3-e4 White needs several preparatory moves. In the following play, he supports the intended e3-e4 with moves 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14.Once the white pawn arrives at e4, White will have a strong pawn center that will batter down Black’s weakened resistance.

7.cxd5 exd5 8.Bd3 b6 9.Ne2 Ba6 10.0-0 c5 11.Ng3 Re8 12.f3 Qc7 13.Bxa6 Nxa6 14.Qd3 Nb8 15.Bd2 Nc6 16.e4!

A very difficult situation for Black. If he captures White’s e-pawn with his d-pawn, then White recaptures with his f-pawn. This maintains White’s overwhelming center and opens up the f-file for White’s attack.

Black therefore stands pat in the center. White continues powerfully with e4-e5, *chasing away Black’s last protective piece on the kingside.*

16…Rad8 17.e5! Nd7 18.f4! Na5 19.Nh5 g6 (D)



7

The stage is set for a dynamic concluding attack by White.

20.f5!! gxh5 21.Bh6! Kh8 22.f6 Rg8 23.Bg7+ Rxg7 24.fxg7+ Kg8

After 24…Kxg7 White has the same winning reply.

25.Rxf7!! Qc6

After 25…Kxf7 26.Qxh7 White threatens to obtain a new queen with discovered – and double! – check. On 26…Rg8 27.Rf1+ wins easily.

26.Raf1 Qh6 27.Qf5 Nc6 28.Rxd7 Black resigns.

For if 28…Rxd7 29.Qf8#.

A wonderfully instructive game. A comparison of Diagram 6 with Diagram 7 shows clearly how the formation of White’s overwhelming center left Black with a steadily deteriorating game.

In the next game White wins convincingly when Black runs into trouble by mistakenly giving up a snug defensive position in the center.

Queen’s Indian Defense

White – Black

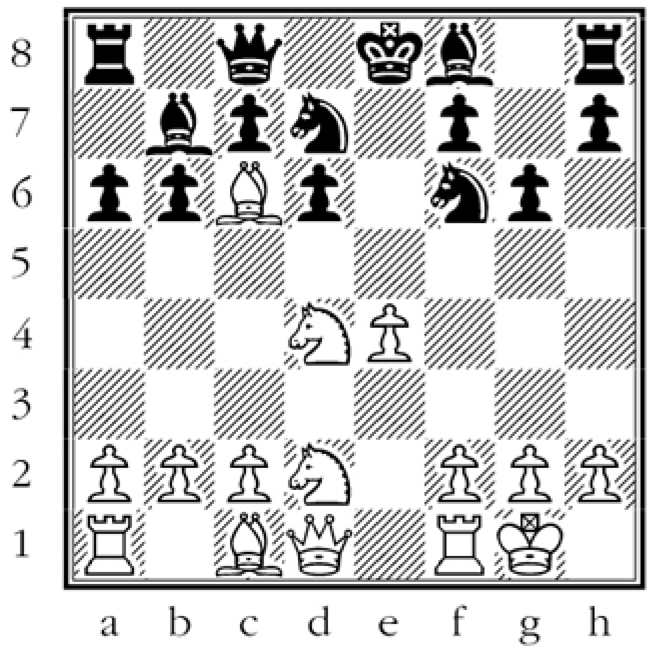
1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 b6 3.e3 Bb7 4.Bd3 d6 5.0-0 Nbd7 6.Nbd2 e5 7.e4 exd4? 8.Nxd4 g6?

White has the makings of a powerful attacking position, thanks to two serious blunders by Black.

Black’s seventh move has opened up the game and brought a white knight to a good post in the center. Black’s eighth move is another lapse. White’s knight at d4, cooperating with his bishop at d3, is now able to invade Black’s territory with menacing effect.

Black should have played 8…a6 in order to prevent the following invasion by White’s bishop.

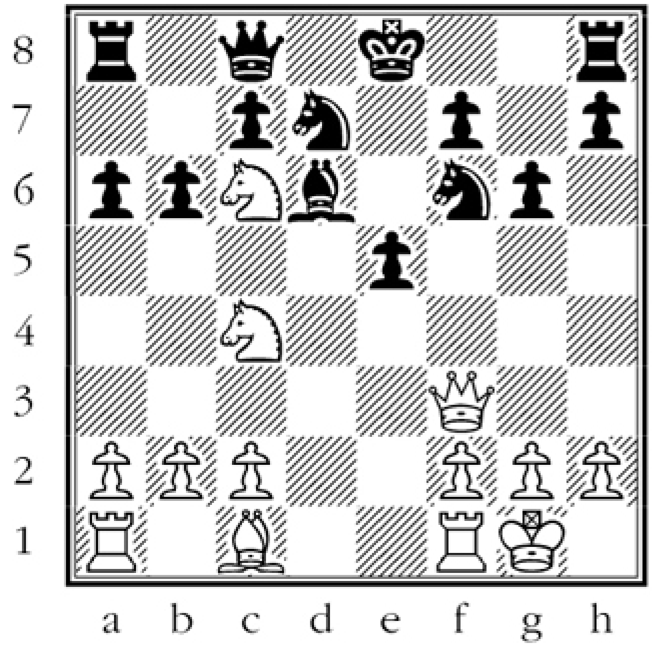
9.Bb5! a6 10.Bc6 Qc8 (D)



8

White now follows up with an astonishing advance in the center, made possible by Black’s faulty seventh move.

11.e5!! dxe5 12.Qf3! Bxc6 13.Nxc6 Bd6 14.Nc4! (D)



9

White has prevented 14…0-0, which loses the black queen after 15.Nxd6 cxd6 16.Ne7+ etc.

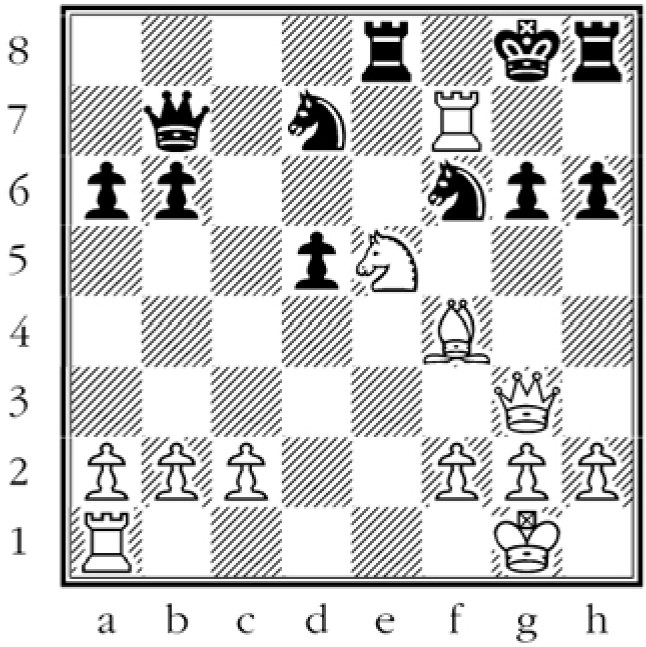
14…e4 15.Re1 h6 16.Qc3! Qb7 17.Nxd6+ cxd6

As a result of the surrender of the center on move 7, White has completely disorganized Black’s game. White now wins back his pawn.

18.Rxe4+! Kf8 19.Re7! Kg7 20.Bf4 Rac8 21.Qb3

White threatens mate on the move.

21…d5 22.Ne5 Rce8 23.Rxf7+ Kg8 24.Qg3! (D)



10

Again White menaces mate on the move. White sees that Black cannot guard against the mate by 24…Nxe5. That would lose Black his queen, so he tries a last desperate resource, but White winds up brilliantly.

24…g5 25.Bxg5! Rxe5 26.Bxf6+ Kxf7 27.Qg7+ Ke6 28.Bxe5 Black resigns.

White threatens Qxh8 as well as Re1 with devastating effect. Black has paid a heavy price for giving up the center at move 7.

In each of the games in this chapter we have seen how White has punished Black for giving up control of the center. Throughout the rest of this book you will see repeatedly how important it is to maintain a foothold in the center.

Chapter Two

How to Exploit Your Superior Development

One of our most important tasks in the opening stage is bringing out our pieces so they will play an active and aggressive role. This process is called “development.”

Because White enjoys the theoretical advantage of moving first, there is always a likelihood that his development will proceed more rapidly than Black’s. For White, neglected development may mean nothing worse than *losing the initiative.* For Black, the same sin may mean *losing the game.*

How do players go wrong in the opening? There are certain failings that we observe in game after game. One player moves the same piece again and again, neglecting to develop his other forces and neglecting to get his king into a safe haven.

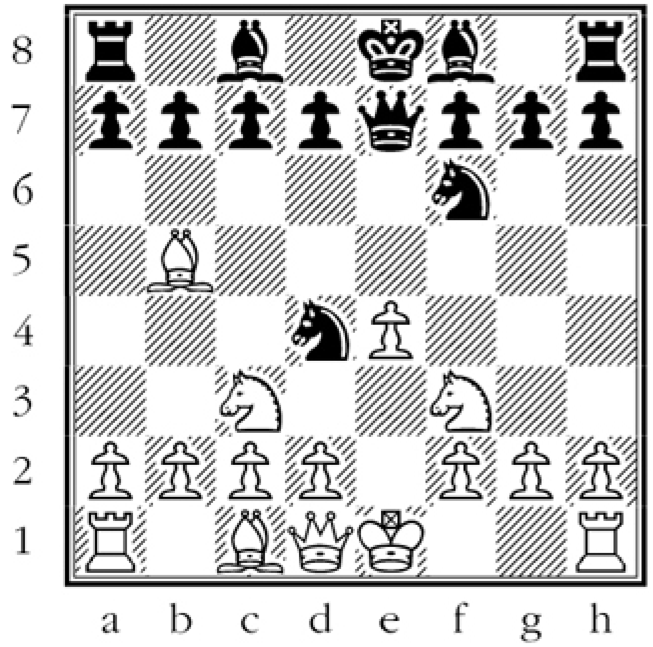
Another player injudiciously spends time capturing a relatively unimportant pawn, losing priceless time in the chase.

Other players develop hesitantly and with lack of foresight, moving pieces to squares from which they will be driven away. Soon, to their great astonishment, they find themselves in a straitjacket position which developed inexorably from their poor opening play.

In the first illustrative game White proves that Black’s faulty development is definitely a case of too little and too late: Four Knights’ Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Nd4 5.Nxe5 Qe7 6.Nf3 (D)



11

White has given his opponent the choice between 6…Nxe4 and 6…Nxb5. Which is right and which is wrong?

At first glance we feel rather suspicious about Black’s procedure. He has moved his queen knight twice, and he has played out his queen very early.

These moves are not quite so bad as they seem. The repeated moves of White’s king knight have canceled out the black knight’s loss of time.

The position of the black queen is definitely bad. Black should therefore play 6…Nxb5 7.Nxb5 Qxe4+. This forces the exchange of queens, so that Black no longer suffers form the disadvantage of having developed his queen too early.

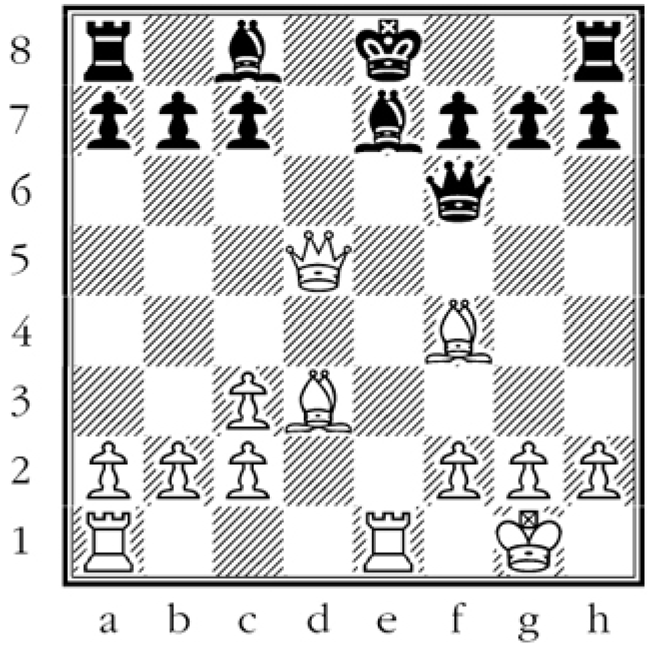
6…Nxe4? 7.0-0! Nxc3 8.dxc3 Nxf3+

If 8…Nxb5 White wins the queen by 9.Re1.

9.Qxf3 Qc5 10.Re1+ Be7 11.Bd3

White has powerful pressure. He is ahead in development, and if Black castles, White replies 12.Qe4! winning a piece because Black has no time to guard his menaced bishop on account of the mating threat.

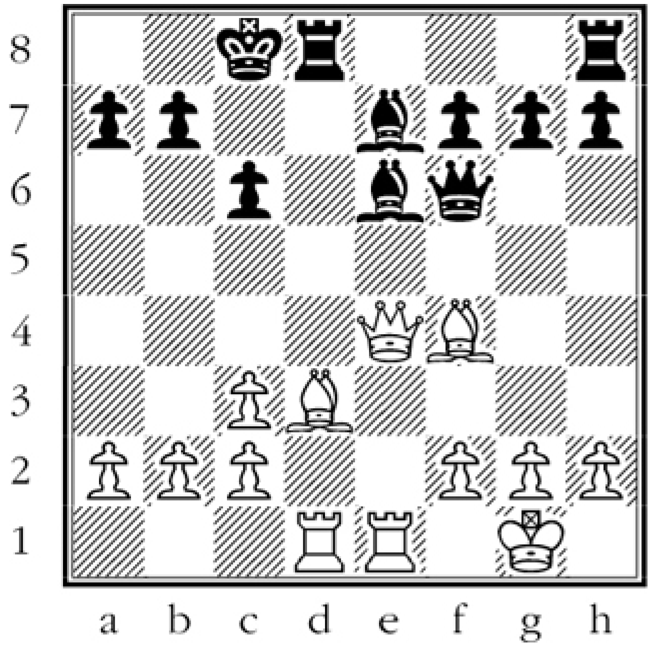
11…d5 12.Be3 Qd6 13.Bf4 Qf6 14.Qxd5!! (D)


12

Can White afford to offer the bishop? The capture 14…Qxf4? would lead to disaster because of 15.Bb5+!. Thus if 15…Kf8 16.Qd8+!! and mate next move. Or 15…c6 16.Bxc6+ bxc6 17.Qxc6+ winning the queen rook with easy victory in sight.

White has a powerful attack because Black's botched development has exposed the black king to frightful dangers.

14…c6 15.Qe4 Be6 16.Rad1! 0-0-0? (D)


13

White has set an incredibly sly trap! White has disguised his attacking plan so subtly that Black is lulled into a false sense of security.

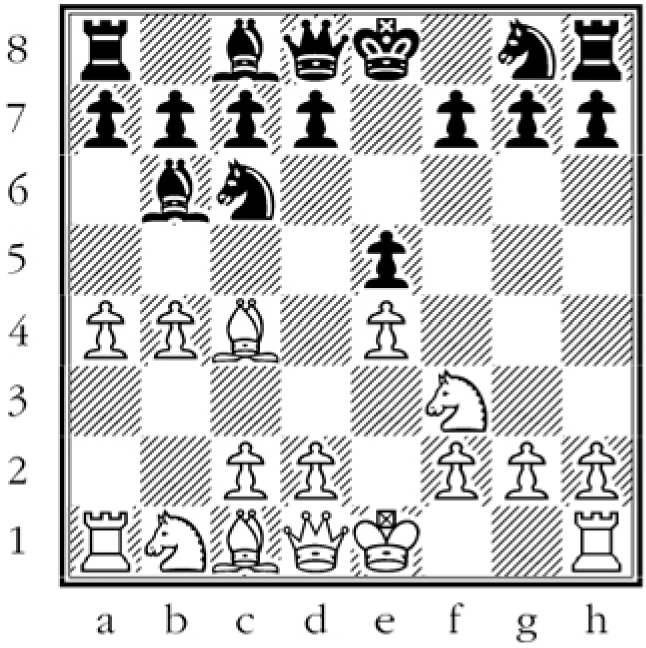
17.Qxc6+!! bxc6 18.Ba6#

In this game White brought about Black's downfall by exploiting his thoughtless development or no development. In the following game, Black goes pawn hunting, while White goes king hunting. In this unequal struggle, White naturally holds all the trumps.

Evans Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4!? Bb6 5.a4 (D)



14

White threatens to win a piece with a4-a5 etc.

The opening moves are extremely interesting. On move 4 White offered a pawn in order to divert Black's pieces and gain time. (The further course of the game will show what White had in mind.) But Black was not obliging. He simply retreated his attacked bishop, wisely avoiding complications that might prove exceedingly troublesome.

However, in playing 5.a4 White poses a new problem. If Black keeps his wits about him, he can react calmly with 5…a6! so that if

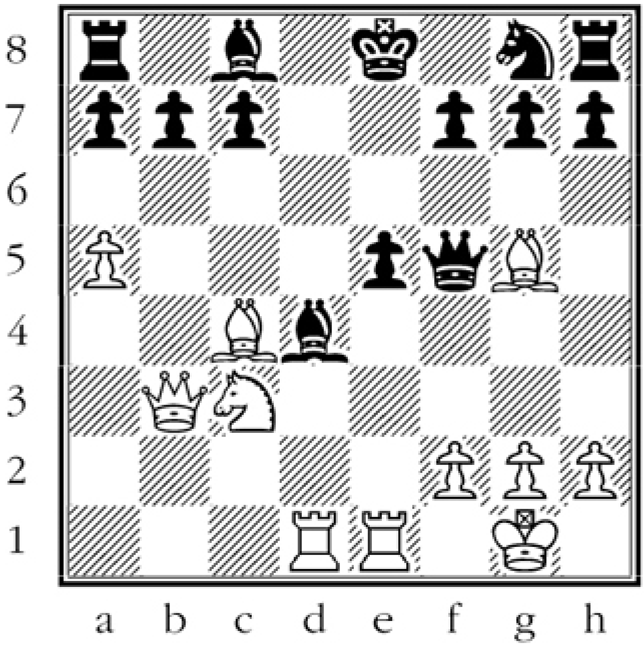
6.a5 Ba7. In that case his bishop is perfectly safe and White has made no headway.

Instead, Black becomes rattled and goes in for an orgy of pawn captures. This is just what White was waiting for.

5…Nxb4? 6.a5 Bc5 7.c3 Nc6 8.d4 exd4 9.0-0 dxc3 10.Qb3 Qe7 11.Nxc3 d6 12.Bg5 Qd7

White is considerably ahead in development as a result of Black’s time-wasting pawn captures. Black’s position is already seriously compromised. Thus, if he tries 12…f6 White wins by 13.Bxg8 fxg5 14.Nd5 Qd8 15.Nb6!!. Another unpleasant possibility is 12…Nf6 13.Nd5 Qd8 14.Nxf6+ gxf6 15.Bxf7+ etc.

13.e5! dxe5 14.Rad1! Nd4 15.Nxd4 Bxd4 16.Rfe1 Qf5 (D)



15

White’s rooks are all-powerful on the center files.

Black intends to answer 17.Rxd4 with 17…Qxg5. With all his pieces in action against only two black pieces, White must win. White’s king is quite safe, Black’s king is in mortal danger.

17.Bxf7+! Qxf7 18.Rxe5+! Black resigns.

For if 18…Bxe5 19.Rd8#. And if 18…Kf8 19.Qb4+ c5 20.Rxd4! cxb4 21.Rd8+ Qe8 22.Rexe8+ Kf7 23.Ne4. White comes out at least a piece ahead.

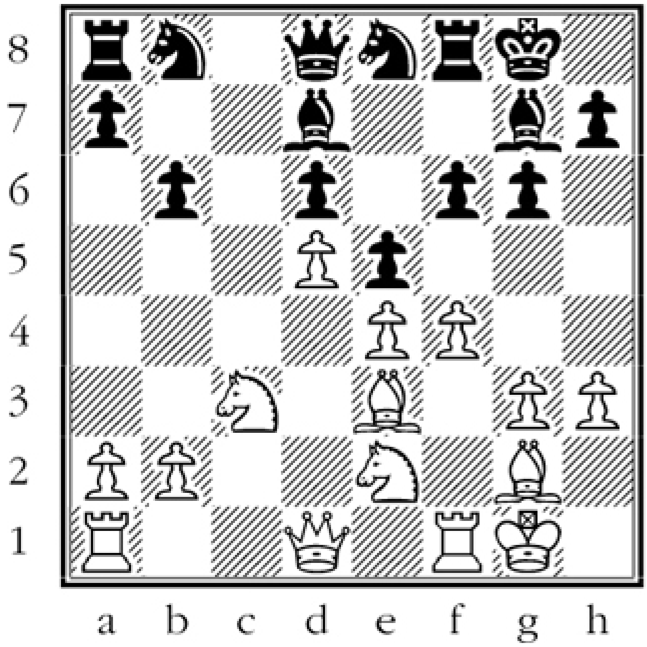
White's vigorous reaction to Black's ill judged pawn-grabbing was very instructive.

In the next game White demonstrates that thoughtless moves ruin Black's prospects of achieving a satisfactory development.

King's Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 c6 7.Nge2 e5 8.h3 Be6? 9.d5 cxd5 10.cxd5 Bd7 11.0-0 Ne8 12.Be3 b6? 13.f4 f6?



16

(D)

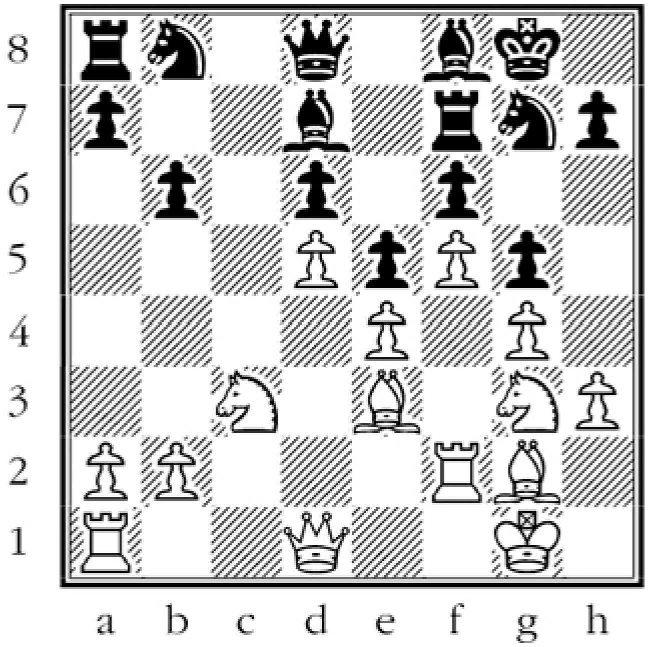
What are the factors that have provided White with such a splendid position? White has brilliant encirclement plans – Black's pieces face a dreary prospect.

Black has played thoughtlessly. His eighth move was a futile provocation which lost time. The retreat 11…Ne8 makes sense if followed up by …f5, fighting for a foothold in the center.

But Black completely overlooks the possibility of playing …f5. First he wastes more time with 12…b6? and then he plays the timid, self-blocking 13…f6?. His pieces have no future and no scope.

White's indicated strategy is to tie up Black's position still more, and that is exactly what he does.

14.f5! g5 15.g4 Rf7 16.Ng3 Bf8 17.Rf2 Ng7 (D)

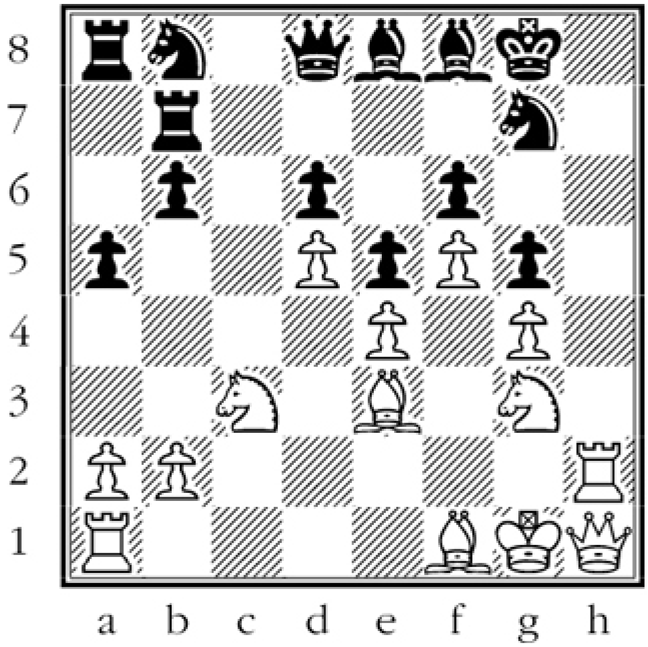


17

White can go ahead with his plan, for though Black has rearranged his pieces, they have become even more ineffectual than before.

When you have an advantage in space and mobility – as White has here – the indicated course is to increase that advantage. White therefore plays to open up the h-file, *which will become his exclusive property.*

18.Bf1! Be8 19.Rh2 a5 20.h4! h6 21.hxg5 hxg5 22.Qf3! Rb7 23.Qh1! (D)



18

White’s attack must succeed. Black’s pieces are posted too awkwardly to have any defensive value.

23…Nd7 24.Rh8+ Kf7 25.Qh7 Ke7 26.Nh5 Black resigns.

For if 26…Bxh5 27.gxh5 and there is no defense against White’s coming h5-h6 which still wins a piece. White’s logical and consistent play in this game is a perfect example of how to demolish a cramped position.

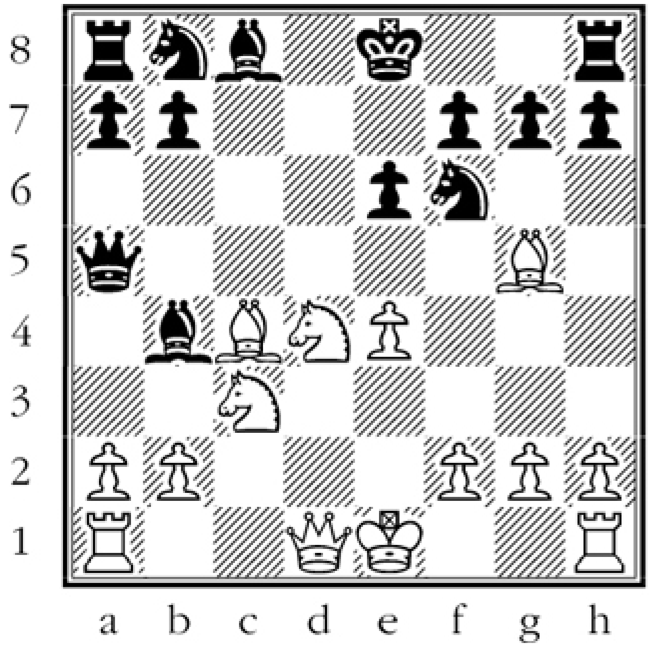
In this game White’s prime task was to refute a development that was planless. White’s hard-hitting play left Black with a middlegame position which offered no hope of unscrambling his pieces.

In the next game Black embarks on a devilishly plausible counterattack. But White has a surprising refutation.

Queen’s Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4+ 5.Nc3 dxc4 6.e4 c5 7.Bxc4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 Qa5 (D)



19

Does White have a lost game as a result of Black’s powerful-looking queen move? Black threatens to win a piece by …Qxg5 or …Bxc3+. But White has an extremely subtle defense!

9.Bxf6! Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 Qxc3+ 11.Kf1 Qxc4+ 12.Kg1

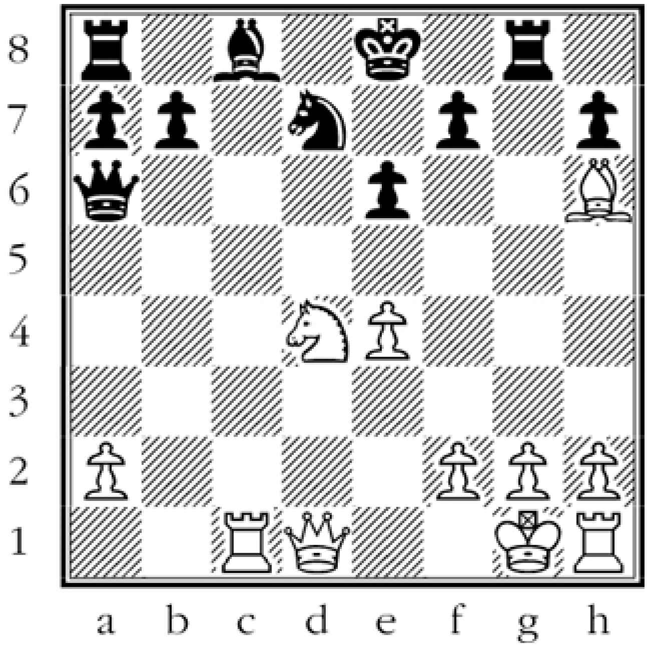
Now we can appreciate the depth of White’s plan:

Black is just on the point of playing 12…gxf6 with a piece to the good. But he realizes that White would continue 13.Rc1, attacking the queen with decisive effect.

So Black concludes he must refrain from “winning a piece” as he fully perceives the far-reaching effect of White’s resourceful ninth move.

Black thought he was seizing the initiative. Actually it is White who is doing the attacking, and he presses his advantage vigorously.

12…Nd7 13.Rc1! Qa6 14.Bxg7 Rg8 15.Bh6 (D)


20

White has shattered Black’s position.

Thanks to White’s ingenious play, the result of Black’s queen moves is that his queen is shunted off to the side. White has seen to it that Black’s king cannot possibly find a safe haven, and that his pieces cannot cooperate effectively.

White’s king is quite safe and his king rook will soon be developed in unorthodox fashion. Meanwhile White has his eye on the more serious weakness in Black’s game: his isolated and indefensible h-pawn.

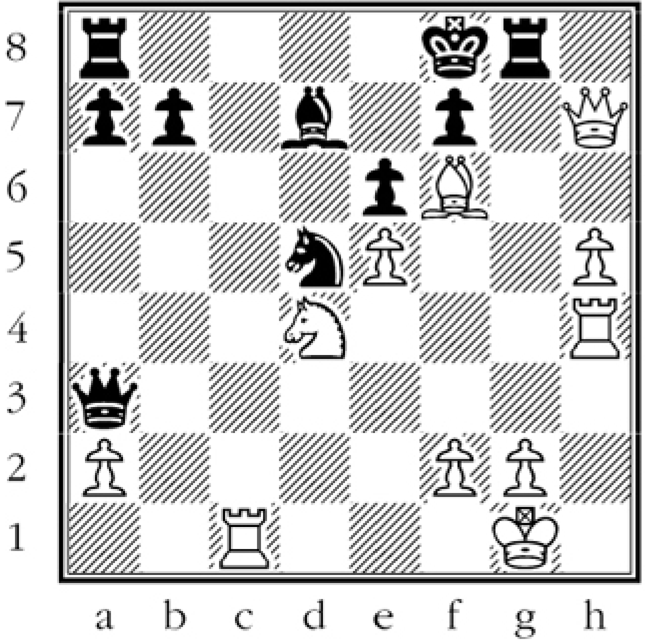
15…Nf6 16.e5 Nd5 17.h4! Bd7 18.Qc2! Rg6 19.h5! Rg4

White has left Black no choice, for if 19…Rxh6 20.Qd2 wins the rook!

Thus White succeeds in capturing the weak h-pawn, which in turn gives him a menacing passed pawn. *Black cannot put up proper resistance because his faulty development has split his forces.*

20.Qxh7 Ke7 21.Rh4! Rgg8 22.Bg7! Qa3 23.Bf6+! Kf8

White’s coming attack, which relies on the power of the mighty passed pawn, cannot be stemmed by Black’s disorganized forces. (D)



21

White can now play 24.Rc7!! for if 24…Nxc7 25.h6!! and Black is helpless against 26.Qxg8+!! and 27.h7+ etc.

24.Rc7!! Nxf6 25.exf6 Qd6 26.h6!! Black resigns.

There is no defense to the coming 27.Qg7+!!.With this sparkling example we conclude the study of faulty development on Black’s part and how White exploits it. The faulty development has taken different forms, but in each case White’s resulting initiative has led to a quick decision. Study White’s procedure in each of these games and you will find opportunities to use similar methods in your own games.

Chapter Three

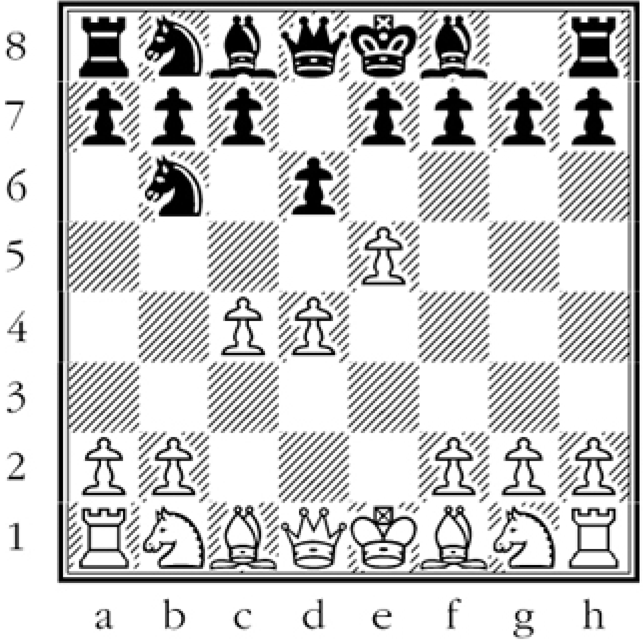
How to Exploit Your Superior Mobility

You will find, almost without exception, that when you have the better development, your pieces have more mobility than your opponent's forces. Remember that the first move gives you a springboard for getting ahead in development – and for having more mobility than Black has.

Mobility, as you saw in the first chapter, is connected with having a powerful position in the center. The stronger your position in the center, the more mobility your pieces will have. In the following game, White emphasizes this point very strongly.

Alekhine's Defense
White – Black
1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Nb6

Black has developed one piece, White hasn't developed any at all. Yet White has considerable mobility, as his center pawns dominate the center and many avenues of development are open to his pieces. (Black's lead in development is academic, as his knight can accomplish very little from b6.) White's immediate aim is to support his powerful pawn center by advancing his f-pawn. (D)



22

Though Black is ahead in development, White has more mobility!

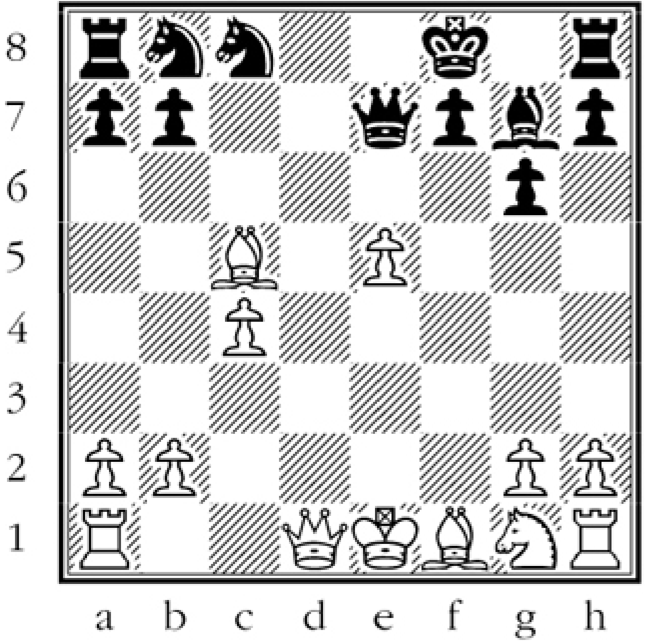
5.f4 dxe5 6.fxe5 g6 7.Be3 Bg7 8.Nc3 c5

The advance of Black's c-pawn is logical, as it breaks up the center. (On 9.d5 Bxe5 10.Bxc5 Black has a playable but clearly inferior game, as his knight at b6 is sadly lacking in mobility.) Instead, Black tries to win a pawn outright. The attempt is disastrous because White leaves Black with an unbearably cramped position. White now makes admirably effective use of his superior mobility.

9.d5 Qc7? 10.d6! exd6 11.Nb5! Qe7 12.Nxd6+ Kf8 13.Nxc8! Nxc8 14.Bxc5!! Black resigns.

An extraordinary finish. If 14…Qxc5 15.Qd8#. Thus White wins the queen by force.

White succeeded admirably in this game because Black started an attack on White’s center and failed to follow it up. This gave White time to exploit his superior mobility to the utmost. (D)



23

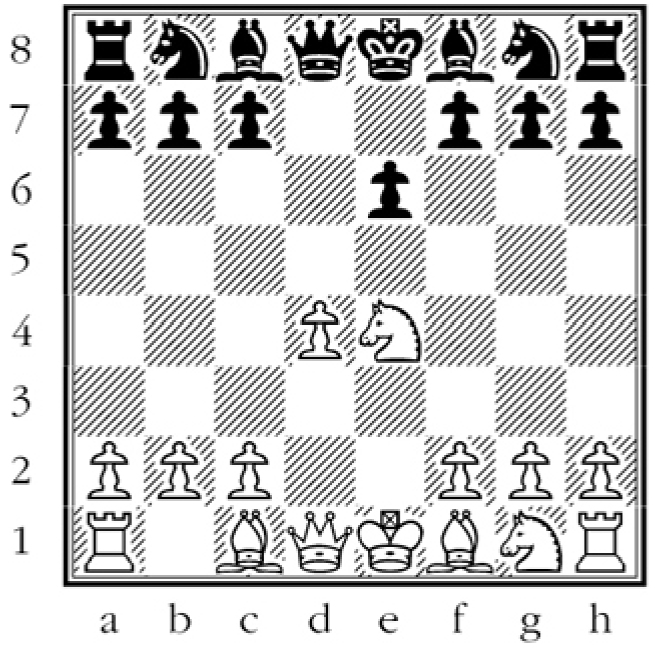
White is still behind in development and ahead in mobility.

The remaining games in this chapter are more orthodox, for White has superior development, superior mobility, and control of the center in each case.

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 (D)



24

White’s dominating position in the center makes it likely that he will have vastly superior mobility in the middle game.

White has a free hand in the center, thanks to Black’s colorless third move. White’s knight is strongly centralized at e4; his d-pawn controls the important center square e5.

4…Nd7 5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Bd3 Be7 7.0-0 Nxe4 8.Bxe4 Nf6 9.Bd3

White’s game is noticeably freer.

9…b6?

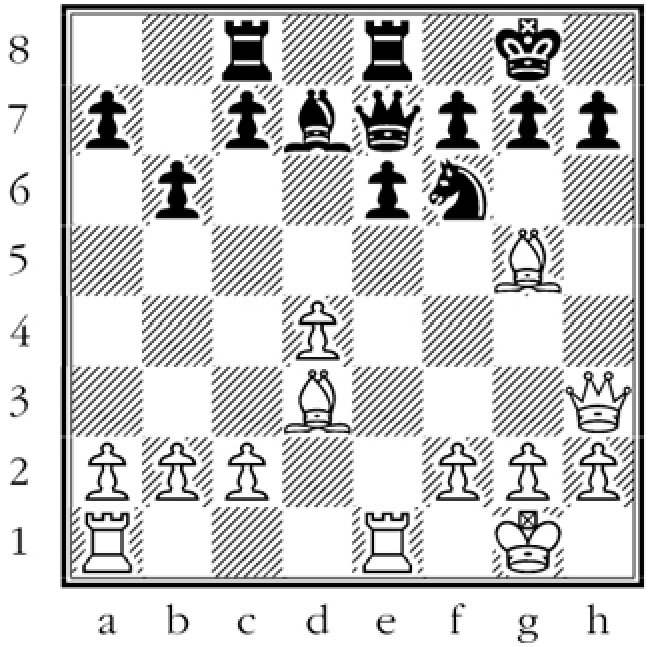
Black’s position is cramped, but he can at least make a fight out of it by playing 9…c5.

10.Ne5! 0-0 11.Nc6 Qd6 12.Qf3!

Very cleaver. White threatens to win a rook by 13.Nxe7+.

If 12…Bb7? 13.Nxe7+ and White wins a piece. Black must therefore develop his queen bishop to d7, where it has no mobility. Thus White’s lead in mobility becomes even more pronounced.

12…Bd7 13.Nxe7+ Qxe7 14.Bg5 Rac8 15.Rfe1 Rfe8 16.Qh3! (D)



25

White’s pressure against Black’s kingside is irresistible. Now White threatens 17.Bxf6 followed by 18.Qxh7+.

White’s superior mobility has provided him with a devastating kingside attack. If 16…h6 17.Bxh6! gxh6 18.Qxh6 and Black is helpless against the coming 19.Re5 and 20.Rg5+. And if 16…g6 17.Qh4 Kg7 18.Re4! and White’s pin leads to Black’s downfall after 19.Rf4.With his next move Black admits his despair.

16…Qd6 17.Bxf6 gxf6 18.Qh6! f5 19.Re3 Qxd4 20.c3! Black resigns.

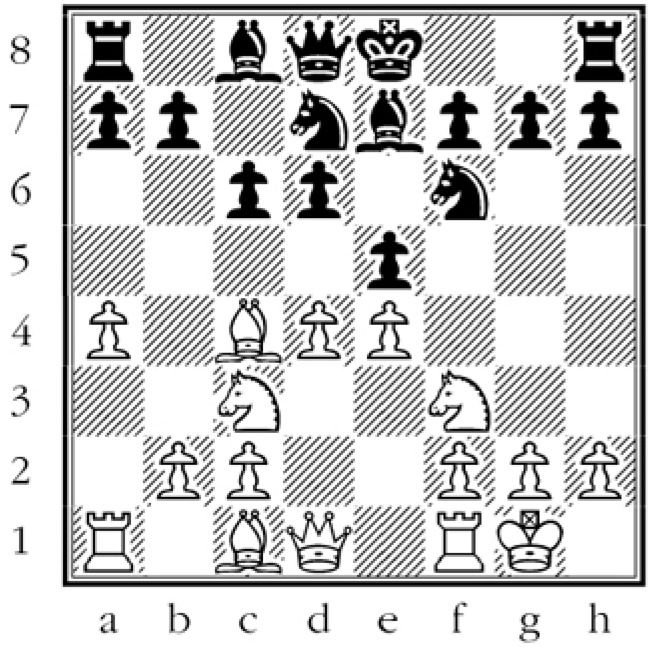
If Black retreats 20…Qg7 or 20…Qd6, he must give up his queen after 21.Rg3(+). Otherwise, White forces checkmate with 21.Rg3+ etc. White had an overwhelming advantage in mobility from the third move on as a result of Black’s passive play.

In the following game Black fights hard to maintain his grip on the center. But his development is slow and cramped, And White plays with masterly consistency for domination of the open lines.

Philidor’s Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 Nf6 4.Nc3 Nbd7 5.Bc4 Be7 6.0-0 c6 7.a4 (D)



26

White has an advantage in the fact that Black’s bishops have very little scope.

White has already put his finger on the weakness of Black’s position: The development selected by Black is slow, clumsy, and cramped. White notes especially the lack of mobility of Black’s bishops. His king bishop is blocked by his d-pawn; his queen bishop is blocked by his queen knight.

White’s policy from now on will be to create more open lines for his own forces and at the same time to restrain Black from freeing himself.

7…Qc7 8.Qe2 h6 9.Ba2 Nf8 10.Qc4! Ne6 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Nh4! Nh5 13.Nf5 Bf8 14.Be3 g6 15.Rad1!!

White’s last move looks like an oversight, but it isn’t. He loses no time occupying the open d-file, even though his knight is attacked.

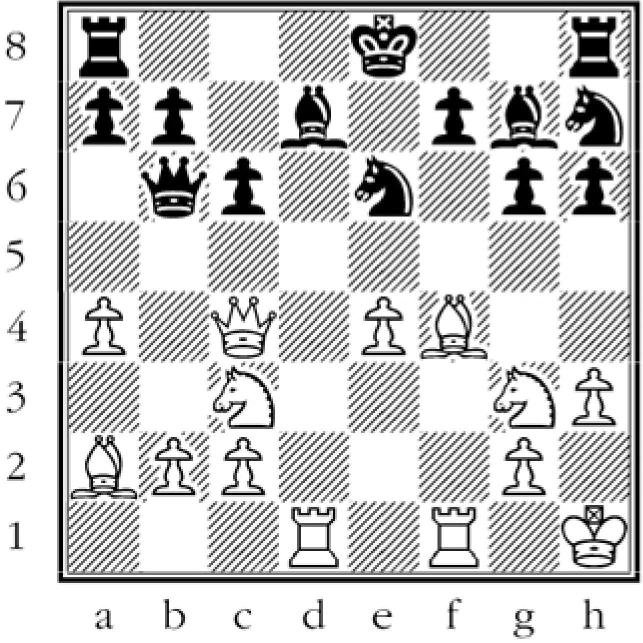
This is how White reasons: As Black has not yet castled, he is unable to bring a rook to the d-file to dispute White’s occupation of that open line.

Furthermore, because Black’s king is still in the center, he cannot hope to win a piece with impunity. Thus if 15…gxf5 16.exf5 Nd8 17.Nd5! Qa5 18.Nb6!! axb6 19.Rxd8+! Kxd8 20.Qxf7 and Black’s king perishes in the crossfire of the enemy pieces.

This fascinating variation, which deserves the most careful study, is a magnificent example of White's power of superior mobility.

15…Bd7 16.Ng3 Nf6 17.h3 Bg7 18.f4! exf4 19.Bxf4 Qb6+ 20.Kh1 Nh7

White has increased his mobility still more by opening the f-file. Thus he is ready for action on two open files. (D)



27

White can now win by a very brilliant combination.

21.Rxd7! Kxd7 22.Be3!! Raf8

He might just as well resign. If 22…Qxe3 23.Rxf7+ Kd8 24.Qxe6 forces mate.

23.Rxf7+!! Black resigns.

For if 23…Rxf7 24.Qxe6+ Kd8 25.Bxb6+ axb6 26.Qxf7 and Black is hopelessly behind in material.

White's play was a masterpiece of consistently utilizing superior mobility. From the very start White took merciless advantage of Black's lack of mobility. He never gave Black a chance because he never allowed Black's pieces to cooperate properly.

In the next game White neatly combines superior mobility with control of the center and lasting kingside attack.

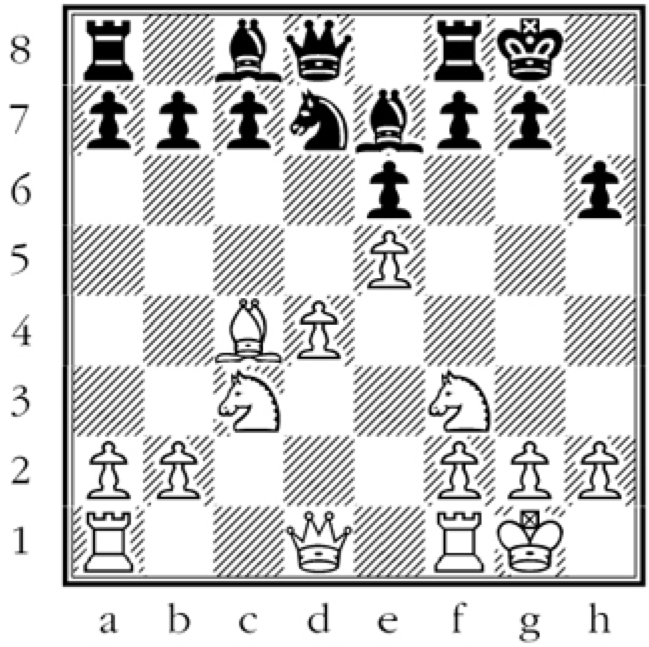
Queen's Gambit

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6

White now seizes on the fact that with his second move Black has given up his hold on the center. Black should therefore play …c5 as soon as possible in order to fight for a foothold in the center. Because Black holds back timidly, White gains an overwhelming position in the center by energetic play.

5.Bg5! Be7 6.e4! h6? 7.Bxf6 Bxf6 8.Bxc4 Nd7 9.0-0 0-0 10.e5! Be7 (D)



28

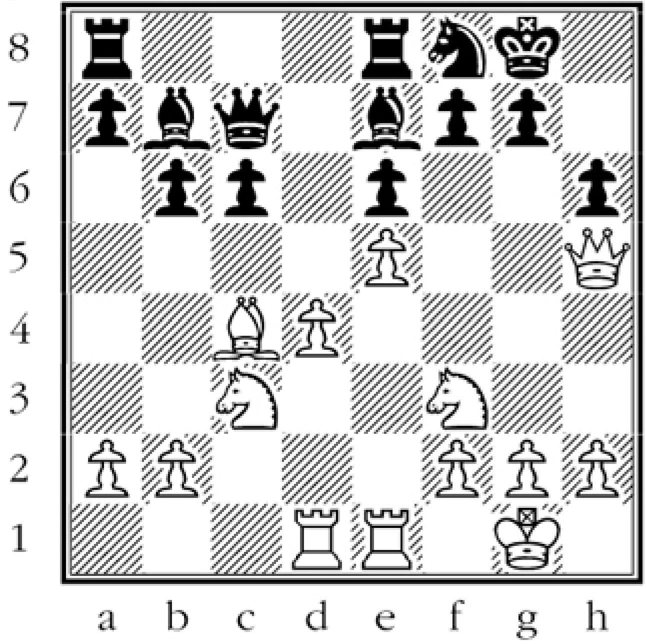
White's formation is aggressive, while the outlook for Black's pieces is very poor.

White has driven a wedge into Black's position by advancing his e-pawn to e5. One important consequence is that he has prevented Black from bringing his knight to f6. This is the best square for a knight defending the kingside. It follows that the combination of White's aggressive position in the center, plus the aggressive position of his pieces, foreshadows a powerful attack by White.

Note in the following play how White uses the square e4 as a steppingstone for transporting his pieces to the kingside. We know from the start that his onslaught will be successful because Black has so little maneuvering space for defensive purposes.

11.Qe2 Re8 12.Rad1! c6 13.Qe4! Qc7 14.Rfe1 Nf8 15.Qg4 b6 16.Qh5 Bb7

The position begins to look very threatening for Black. White now proceeds to bring more pieces to the kingside. Because of the cramped position of his forces, Black cannot defend with equal vigor. (D)



29

White again gets more pieces into the attack using the e4-square.

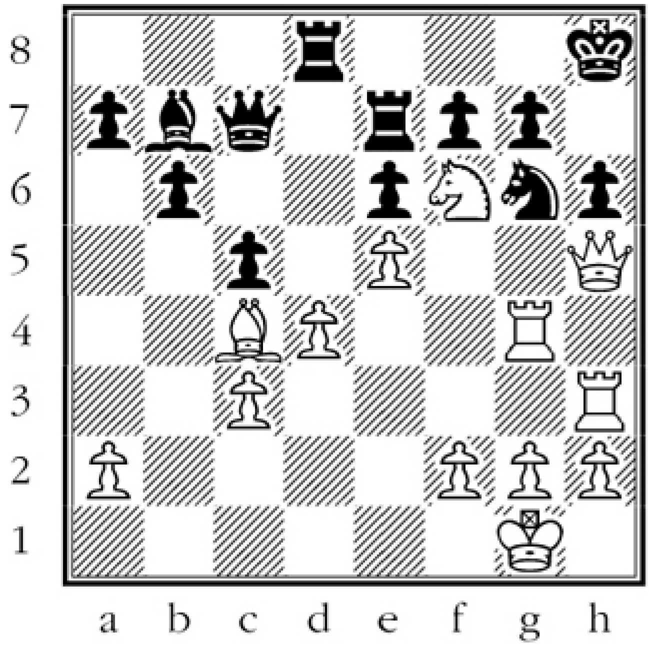
17.Re4! Bb4 18.Rg4 Bxc3 19.bxc3 Kh8 20.Ng5! Re7 21.Ne4! Rd8 22.Rd3! c5

At last Black plays the move he should have played early in the opening. But White is now ready for the final attack, having maneuvered his knight into position for a deadly stroke. He has also moved his queen rook into position for the final attack.

23.Nf6!

With the brutal threat of 24.Qxh6+!! gxh6 25.Rg8#. White’s superior mobility has become overwhelming. Of course if Black tries 23…gxf6 then 24.Qxh6+ and 25.Qg7#.

23…Ng6 24.Rh3 Black resigns. (D)



30

White has left Black no move to hold the position.

White’s overwhelming plus in mobility has left Black without any satisfactory defense. Thus if 24…gxf6 25.Qxh6+ Kg8 26.Qh8#. Or 24…cxd4 25.Qg5!! Qxc4 26.Rxh6+! gxh6 27.Qxh6#. White never gave Black a chance after Black’s all too passive handling of the opening.

In the following game White again triumphs after dominating the center and preventing Black from getting his pieces into action. White’s pawn-storming attack follows with crushing – and logical – effect.

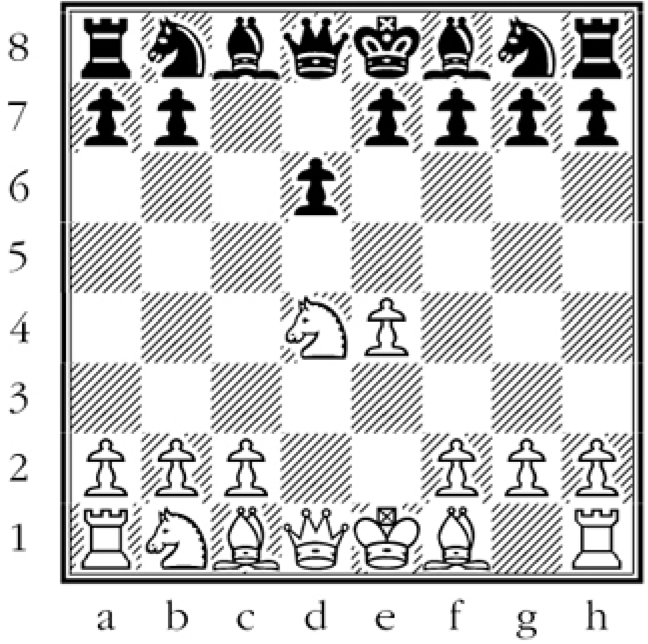
Sicilian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4

White has a well-centralized knight established at d4. Black cannot imitate this maneuver. Note also that White controls the important center square d5 with his e-pawn.

On these two grounds it seems likely that White will dominate the center and will therefore enjoy superior mobility. (D)



31

There are already strong indications that White may achieve an overwhelming plus in mobility.

4…Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Be2 e6 7.Be3 Be7 8.0-0 0-0

How has the situation developed as regards mobility? Both white bishops have free diagonals; both black bishops are hemmed in by pawns. The outlook for Black's game is very unpromising.

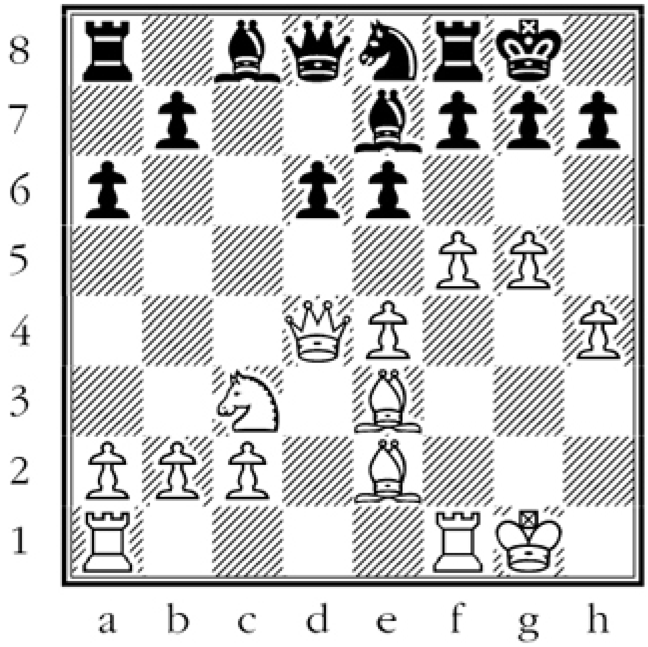
In such positions White always has a practical problem: *How can his superior mobility be increased still further?* White solves this problem by a general advance of his kingside pawns, which will achieve the following: (1) He will congest Black's position more than ever.

(2) He will drive away Black's king knight – his best defensive piece – from f6.

(3) He will subject Black's position, already cramped unbearably, to a devastating pawn-storming attack.

9.f4 Qc7 10.g4! a6 11.g5 Ne8 12.f5 Qd8 13.h4 Nxd4 14.Qxd4

White’s plan has made considerable progress. As a result of Black’s unpromising opening line of play, White has deprived Black of any constructive plan. The continuation …Bd7 and …Bc6 is about the best Black has. (D)



32

The formidable centralization of White’s queen provokes Black to lose his foothold in the center.

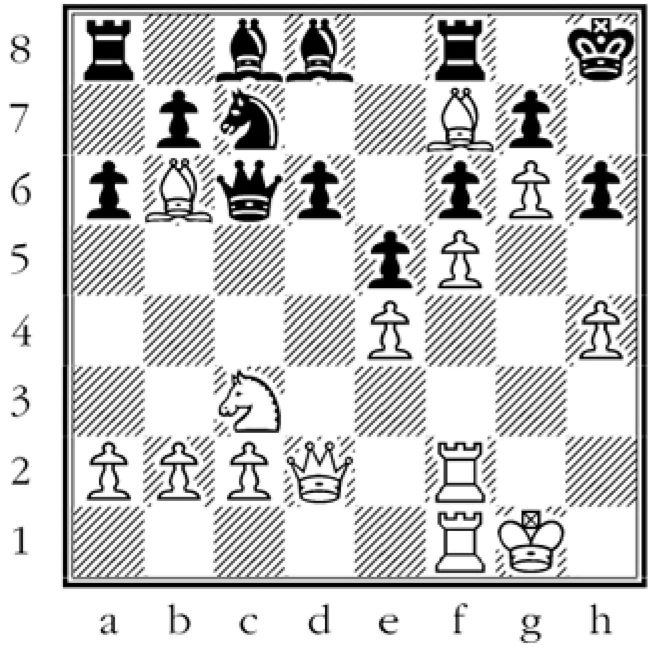
14…e5?

Very shortsighted. He drives away to queen, but at the cost of permanently losing pawn control of d5. This vital center square now becomes a “hole,” completely at the mercy of the white pieces.

15.Qd2 Nc7 16.Bb6! Qd7 17.Rf2 Bd8 18.Raf1

White menaces a decisive breach with 19.f6 g6 20.h5. Black stops this, but White penetrates in a different way.

18…f6 19.Bc4+ Kh8 20.g6! h6 21.Bf7 Qc6 (D)



33

There is no defense against White’s coming attack.

22.Bxc7

White can now win by 22.Be3 and 23.Bxh6!. He plans a much more striking finish.

22…Bxc7 23.Rg2! d5

Desperation.

24.Qxh6+!! Black resigns.

For if 24…gxh6 25.g7+ Kh7 and now White captures the rook, promoting to a knight (!) and giving checkmate after 26.gxf8N+ Kh8 27.Rg8#!

The games in this chapter teach a lesson of the greatest practical importance – that when White gets the initiative through superior mobility, he has a lasting advantage that he can increase systematically until he achieves victory.

The first step is to pinpoint Black’s faulty strategy. Once you see how he has committed himself to a cramped position, you can find ways to increase your command of the board. You must not swerve from your determination to keep him in a vice; one thoughtless move will often allow the enemy to escape. All five games in this chapter show how you maintain and increase the pressure until Black’s position collapses.

Chapter Four

How to Exploit Black's Premature Opening up of the Position

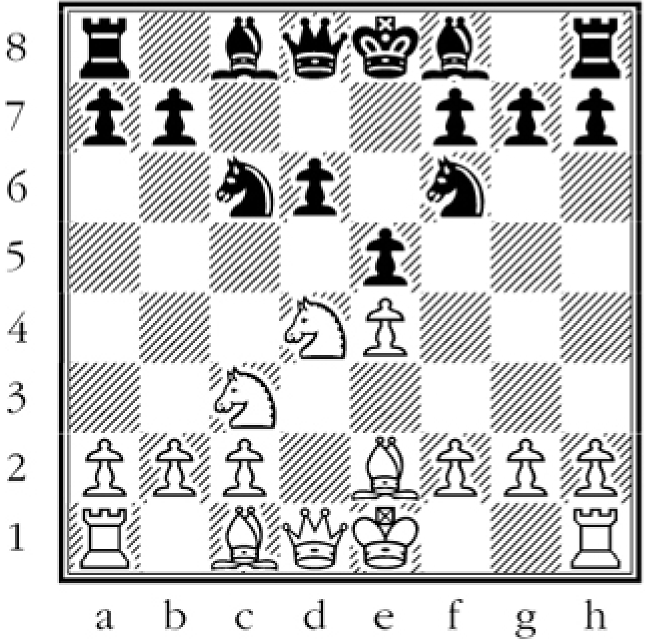
The bane of many chess books is that they ignore the human factor. You may have read the last paragraphs of the last chapter with some skepticism. Suppose Black is not satisfied to be trussed up; suppose he fights back? How does White proceed in such case?

We can approach the problem of cramped positions by dividing such positions into three parts. Those positions in which Black defends passively without any attempt to fight back have been treated in the previous chapter. Positions in which Black resorts to counterattack will be the subject matter of Chapter Five.

We start with a game in which Black is so anxious to avoid a cramped position that he opens up the game before castling. This transfers the struggle from a predominantly *strategical* one to a predominantly *tactical* one. The switch, as we shall see, favors White.

Sicilian Defense
White – Black
1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Be2 e5

This reminds us of Black’s 14th move in the previous game (after Diagram 32). Black surrenders control of the important square d5. This gives White a powerful hold on the center and foreshadows a serious lack of mobility on Black’s part. (D)



34

White intends to train his guns on the weakness created by Black’s last move.

7.Nf3 h6 8.Be3 Be6 9.0-0 Be7 10.Qd2 d5?

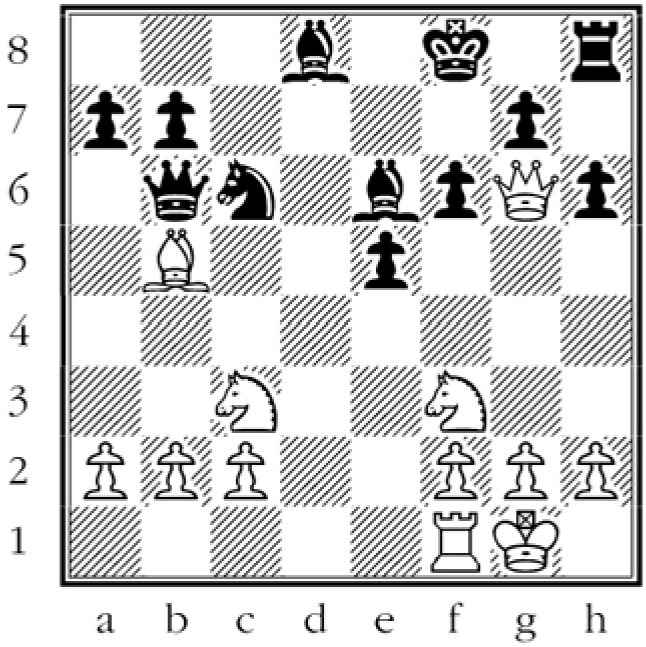
In his anxiety to get a free hand in the center, Black advances forthrightly to get rid of White’s control of the d5-square.

Strategically the advance is irreproachable. It has, however, a drawback of provoking a lasting attack by White.

11.exd5 Nxd5 12.Bb5!

By pinning Black’s queen knight, White threatens Nxe5. This forces one concession after another by Black.

12…f6 13.Rad1 Nxe3 14.Qxe3 Qb6 15.Qd3 Rd8 16.Qg6+ Kf8 17.Rxd8+ Bxd8 (D)



35

White is operating with brilliant tactical threats. If 17…Nxd8?? 18.Qe8#. If 17…Qxd8 18.Bxc6 bxc6 19.Nxe5 wins a pawn.

18.Nxe5! Bc7

White's threats cannot be met satisfactorily: if 18…Nxe5?? 19.Qe8#. If 18…fxe5 19.Qxe6 and White has a winning game.

19.Nd5! Black resigns.

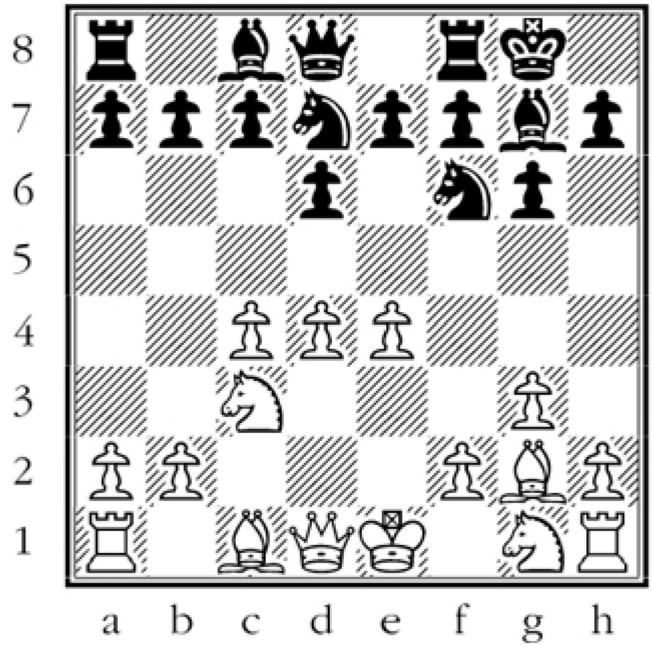
A magnificent winning move. If 19…Qxb5 20.Nxc7 attacking Black's queen and also threatening Qe8#. If 19…Bxd5 20.Nd7+ winning Black's queen.

Thus White faultlessly exploited Black's premature opening up of the position. In the following game Black is strategically inconsistent. First he drifts listlessly into a critically cramped position; then, with equally poor judgment, he strikes out recklessly to achieve freedom. White hits back hard.

King's Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Nbd7 (D)



36

White’s pieces are likely to have more mobility than Black’s forces.

7.Nf3 e5 8.0-0 h6 9.h3 Kh7 10.Be3 Ng8 11.Qc2 Nb6 12.b3 f5?

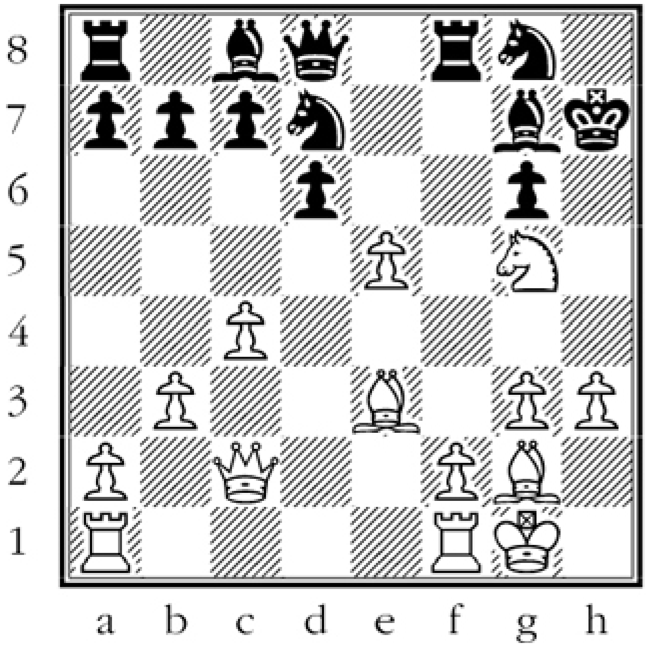
Dissatisfied with the slight scope of his forces, Black opens up the position violently. *But White, having much greater mobility,* reacts with brutal effectiveness.

What makes White’s reaction all the more powerful is that Black has loosened up the pawn position in the vicinity of his king. The result is that it is relatively easy for White to penetrate the black king’s defenses.

13.dxe5 fxe4 14.Nxe4 Nd7?

Black takes advantage of the fact that White’s e-pawn is pinned on the long diagonal. But this is trifling compared to White’s smashing attack against Black’s weakened kingside.

15.Neg5+! hxg5 16.Nxg5+ Black resigns. (D)



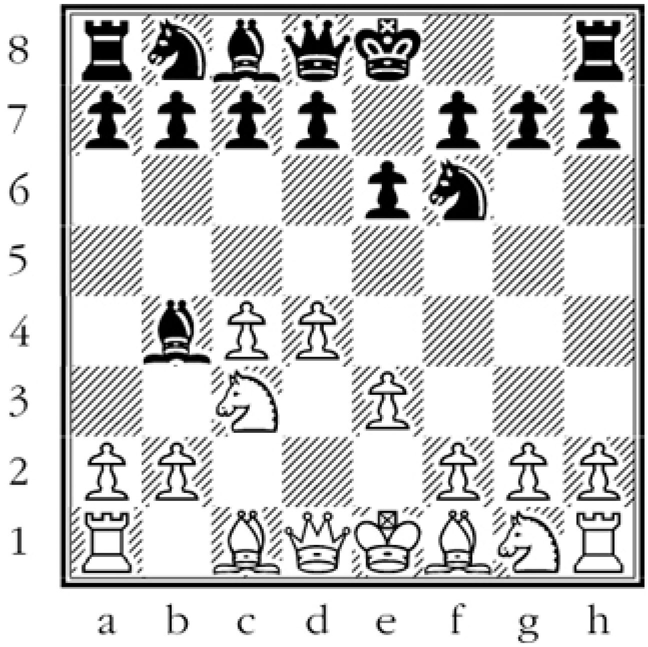
37

White scores a decisive win of material no matter how Black replies. If 16…Kh6 White wins the black queen with 17.Nf7++. If instead 16…Kh8 17.Qxg6 Ndf6 18.exf6 Nxf6 19.Nf7+ Rxf7 20.Qxf7 and White is two pawns and the exchange ahead. In the face of this crushing material advantage, Black resigns.

In this game White profited by Black's cramped game in the opening. Later on, when Black tried to struggle out of his straightjacket, White opened effective lines for his action greedy pieces.

In the next game Black has a satisfactory opening position, but by thoughtlessly opening up the game he exposes himself to a decisive attack. Again White is alive to the possibilities, and quickly works up a withering attack.

Nimzo-Indian Defense
White – Black
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 (D)



38

In this seemingly conservative variation White’s bishops have enormous potential power.

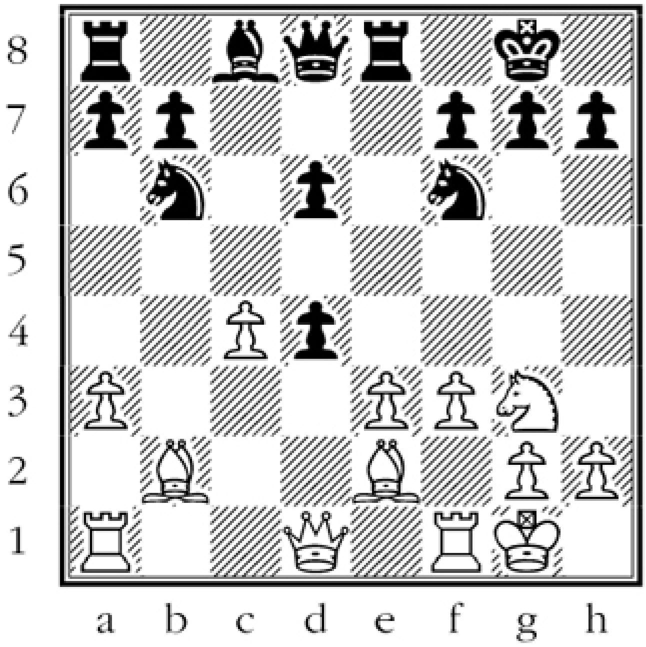
4…0-0 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Re8 7.Ne2 e5 8.Ng3 d6 9.Be2 Nbd7

There is a clash of plans here. As in Diagram 6, White wants to open up the position so that his bishops will have powerful play. Black, on the other hand, should strive to keep the position closed.

10.0-0 c5 11.f3 cxd4?

This sadly inconsistent move opens up a future for White’s dark-square bishop.

12.cxd4! Nb6 13.Bb2 exd4? (D)



39

White’s dark-square bishop has come to life!

White has been on the alert to increase the scope of his bishops. He is well aware that Black has gone completely astray with his 11th and 13th moves. The position is opened up for White’s pieces, and this is particularly true of White’s dark-square bishop. As you will see, White knows just how to derive the maximum benefit from this.

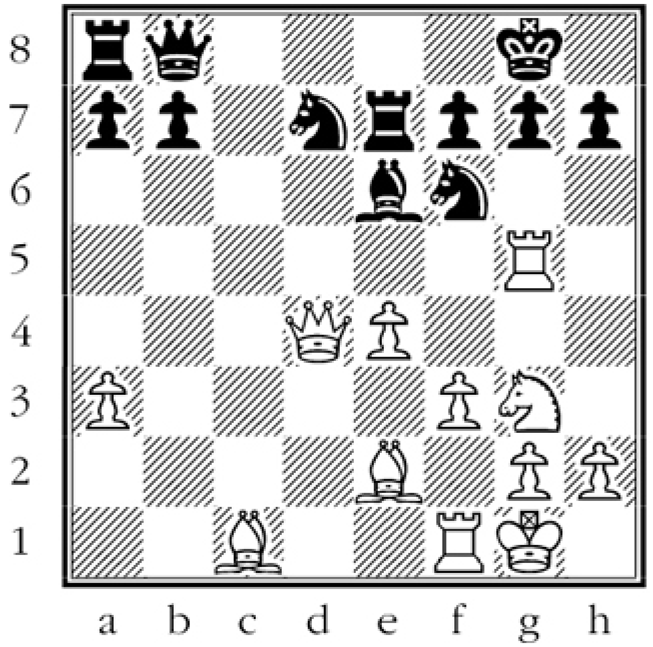
14.e4! Be6 15.Rc1 Re7 16.Qxd4 Qc7 17.c5!

As a result of White’s masterly 14th move he has created a magnificent diagonal for his dark-square bishop and powerfully centralized queen at d4. Thus White is supreme in the center and in the general mobility of his forces. All this may be traced back to Black’s mistake in prematurely opening up the position on move 11.

With the last move White increases his mobility and prepares to switch a rook to the kingside. This will lead to a surprisingly quick decision.

17…dxc5 18.Rxc5 Qf4 19.Bc1! Qb8 20.Rg5! Nbd7

White was threatening Qxf6. (D)



40

White is ready for a bombshell finish.

21.Rxg7+!! Kxg7 22.Nh5+ Kg6

On 22…Kh8 23.Nxf6 Qe5 24.Bb2! Qxd4+ 25.Bxd4 Nxf6 26.Bxf6+ winning a rook.

23.Qe3! Black resigns.

White has foreseen that Black will be helpless against the double threat of 24.Qh6# or 24.Qg5#. He has made Black pay a high price for prematurely opening up the position.

The next game shows a still further refinement of this type of mistake. Black prematurely opens up the position *for his opponent* without even seeking any real or imaginary compensation. White's resulting attack, as we might expect, is devastating.

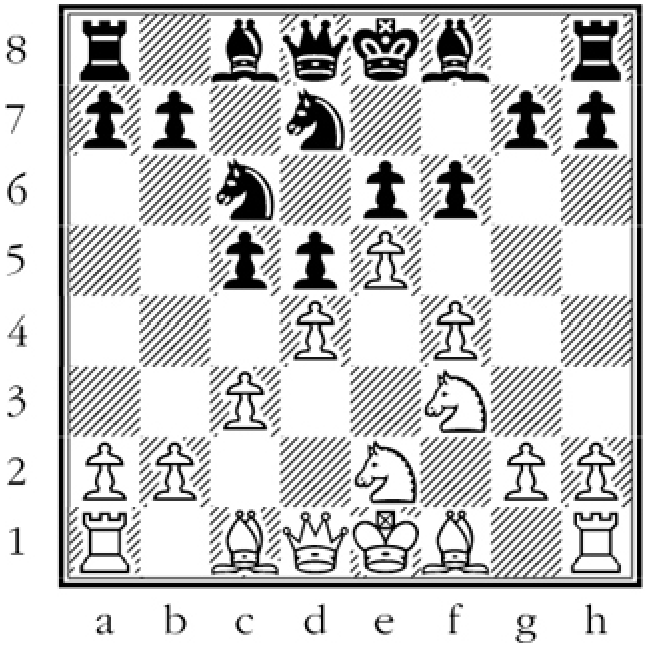
French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.Nce2 c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.f4 f6 8.Nf3

The very nature of this opening gives White a much freer position. His pieces have more scope, and Black's light-square bishop is hemmed in for good.

However, White does not have a completely free hand; Black is keeping the white center under pressure by attacking it with his f- and c-pawns. Since this is all the pressure that Black has, he ought to increase it by playing 8…Qb6. By keeping White’s center under observation, Black would distract White’s attention from his attacking intentions. (D)



41

White is now greatly relieved as Black deprives himself of his only counterplay.

8…cxd4? 9.cxd4 Bb4+ 10.Nc3 fxe5? 11.fxe5 0-0 12.Be3 Nb6 13.Bd3 Nc4 14.Bxc4 dxc4 15.0-0 Ne7

White has the better development and superior mobility. Black is limited to a passive role.

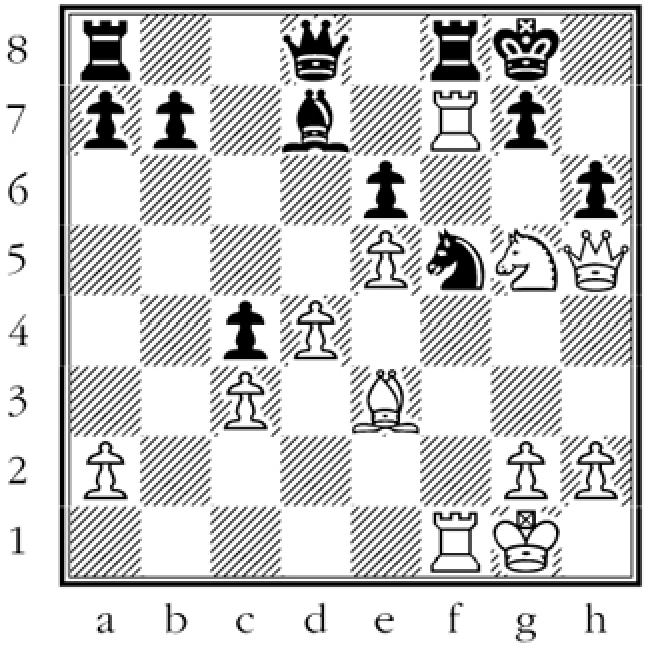
16.Qe2 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Qc7 18.Ng5! Bd7 19.Qh5 h6

White has suddenly built up a powerful attack. Black’s last move seems to give him respite, but White has a surprising reply.

20.Rf7!!

Apparently a losing move in view of the possible reply 20…Be8. But White has a remarkable resource in answer to 20…Be8, namely 21.Rxg7+!! Kxg7 22.Nxe6+ Kg8 23.Qg4+ with a crushing material advantage for White.

20…Qd8 21.Raf1 Nf5 (D)


42

White has a brilliant concluding combination.

Black has managed to block the open f-file, but White is not impressed. He has concentrated his forces so powerfully on the kingside that he can afford spectacular sacrifices.

22.R1xf5! exf5 23.Rxg7+! Kxg7 24.Ne6+! Bxe6 25.Bxh6+ Kh7 26.Bg5+ Kg7 27.Qh6+ Kf7 28.Bxd8 Raxd8 29.Qf6+ Kg8 30.Qxe6+ Kg7 31.Qe7+ Black resigns.

White will advance his passed pawns in the center to achieve a quick victory by queening a pawn. Thus White has made a magnificent use of the open f-file presented him by Black’s premature opening up of the position.

In each of the games in this chapter Black has opened up the position prematurely. Through this opening up he has made it possible for White to develop an overwhelming attack. This type of mistake is frequently made in over-the-board play. Consequently the methods adopted in these games by White are of the greatest practical value. By refuting these premature actions, White successfully defends his initiative.

Chapter Five

How to Exploit Black's Premature Counterattack

In the previous chapter we saw how White won consistently by taking advantage of Black's prematurely opening up the position. White, generally being the player with the better development, is generally in position to benefit by the opening of lines.

Premature counterattack presents a much sharper problem. Here Black not only opens up lines – he actually *attacks.* If White reacts carelessly to a premature opening up of the position, he loses his initiative. If he reacts carelessly to a premature counterattack, *he may well lose the game.*

The following games show in an impressive way how White *can react effectively* to such premature counterattacks.

Evans Gambit Declined

White – Black

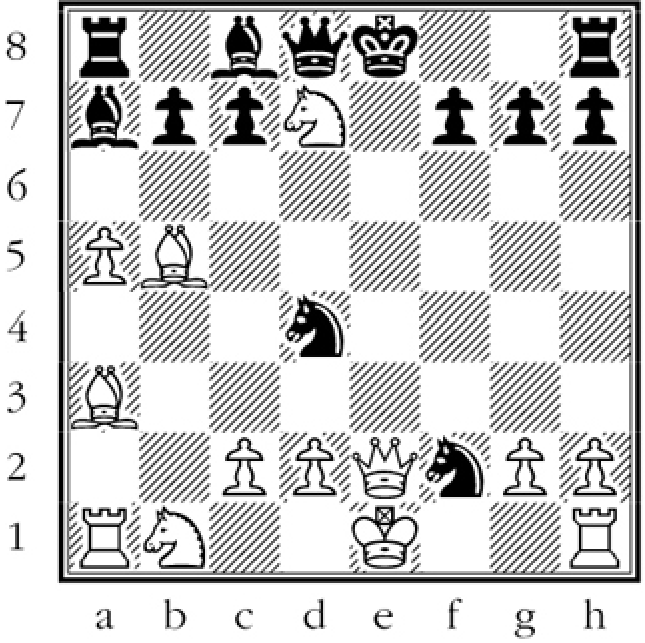
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bb6 5.a4 a6 6.a5 Ba7 7.b5 axb5 8.Bxb5 Nf6

Black has an excellent development and he is now ready to castle into safety. "This won't do!" says White, and he plays to confuse Black with complicated possibilities.

9.Ba3!?

This crafty move provokes Black to embark on a counterattack which looks very attractive because it involves a powerful threat. By playing …Nxe4, Black threatens a decisive gain of material with …Nxf2. Yet White is untroubled. He has looked further ahead and has prepared suitable countermeasures. (Black should play 9…d6, shunning the complications.) **9…Nxe4? 10.Qe2! Nxf2 11.Nxe5! Nd4 12.Nxd7+!!**

White's last move seems incomprehensible at first sight. We might even take it for despair, in view of Black's fourfold threat of …Nxe2 or …Nxh1 or …Nxb5 or …Nxc2+. (Note that 12.Qxf2?? – instead of the move actually played – would not do at all because of 12…Nxc2+ winning White's queen.) (D)



43

White gives up his queen … and wins outright!

12…Nxe2 13.Nf6#!

White had to be exceptionally resourceful to refute Black's plausible and promising counterattack.

Such premature counterattacks are favorites with daring and aggressive players who are aware that bluff is a potent weapon in chess. When the player of the white pieces is equally daring and has superior development in his favor, the counterattack is likely to grind to an abrupt halt. Here is another case in point: Queen's Gambit

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 c5 4.e3 cxd4 5.exd4 Bg4 6.Bxc4

Threatening 7.Bxf7+ Kxf7 8.Ne5+ coming out a pawn ahead with a winning position.

From this variation you can see that White realizes the early development of Black's bishop is ill judged. But Black is determined to counterattack. White must hit hard to keep his initiative.

6…e6 7.Qa4+! Nc6 8.Ne5 Qxd4!? 9.Nxc6 Qe4+

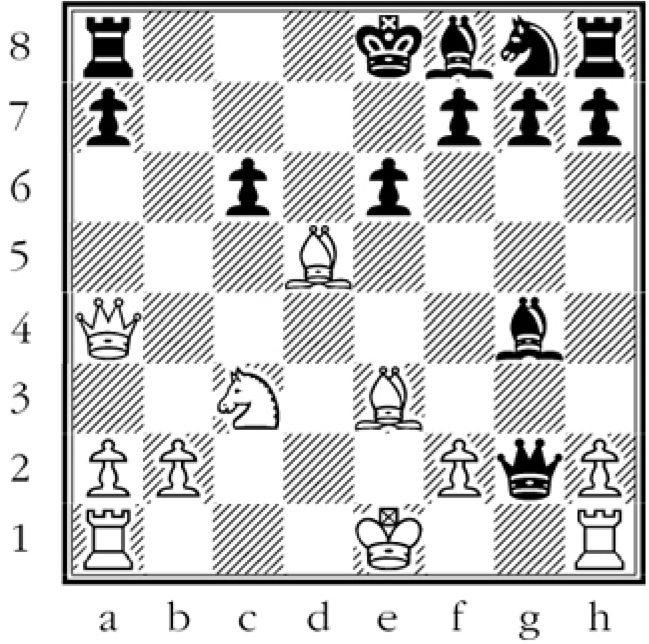
The only move, as he obviously cannot play 9…bxc6?.

10.Be3 bxc6

Forced, for if 10…Qxc6?? White pins and wins the queen with 11.Bb5.

11.Nc3! Qxg2 12.Bd5!!

A complete sermon in one move. White forcefully separates Black's queen from Black's king. The effect of White's brilliant bishop move is that Black's premature counterattack disappears in graceful fireworks.



44

(D)

White's brilliant 12.Be5!! seizes the initiative.

12…exd5 13.Qxc6+ Kd8 14.Qxa8+ Kd7 15.Qb7+ Ke6 16.Qc6+ Bd6 17.Bf4!! Black resigns.

A spectacular finish. After 17…Qxh1+ 18.Kd2 Qxa1 19.Qxd6+, White mates in two more moves.

White has pitilessly punished Black's premature counterattack which took his queen hopelessly far afield. In the following game when Black commits the same mistake, White's punishment is even more forceful.

Vienna Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.Qg4?!

This early development of the queen is wrong on principle. Black's best reply is doubtless 4…Kf8, protecting his g-pawn and threatening to win a piece with …d5. Black would thereby lose the castling privilege but would gain time by his attacking threat.

4…Qf6?

Defending and attacking at the same time. Black is so taken with the false economy of this move that he fails to provide for White's ingenious reply.

5.Nd5!! Qxf2+ 6.Kd1 Kf8

White's powerful knight move has left Black nothing better against the double threat of 7.Nxc7+ or 7.Qxg7. So Black has had to move his king after all. White has even more formidable threats in store for him.

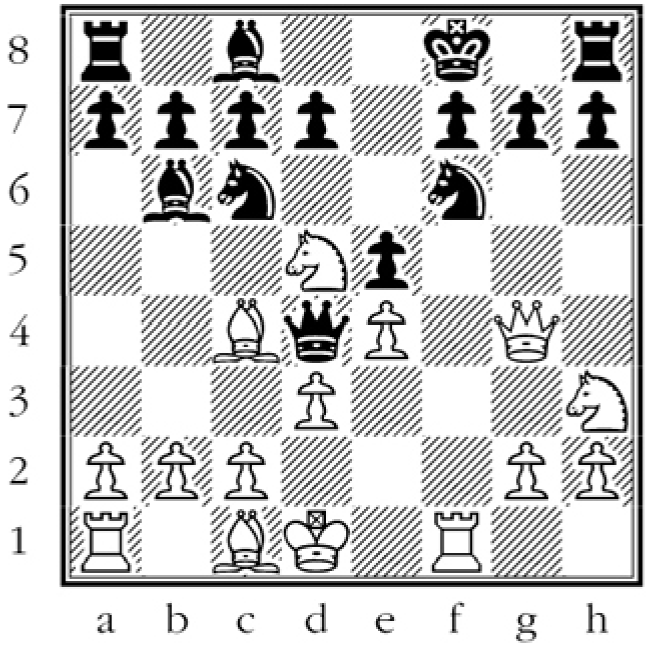
7.Nh3 Qd4 8.d3 Bb6

White was threatening to trap Black's queen by 9.c3!!. He has used Black's premature counterattack to box in Black's queen, which now offers no help to the black king.

But this is not all: White can now operate on the open f-file, thanks to Black's premature attack with the queen. This enables White to win quickly by a spectacular, incisive attack.

9.Rf1! Nf6

White's threat was 10.Nxb6 axb6 11.Rxf7+ and Black can resign. (D)



45

White is ready to embark on a brilliant sacrificial attack.

10.Rxf6! d6

White’s sacrifice of the exchange is based on the idea that if 10…gxf6 11.Bh6+ Ke8 12.Qg7 the king rook cannot be saved. Black tries a different way, but White’s refutation is sensational: **11.Qxg7+ Kxg7 12.Bh6+ Kg8 13.Rg6+!! hxg6 14.Nf6#!**

Rarely do we see such a convincing refutation of a premature counterattack as White has provided here. The next example is much more difficult for White because the counterattack seems to be based on a fairly reasonable idea. Nevertheless, White sees that Black’s counterplay is basically unsound. White follows up that observation with forceful, daring play.

Queen’s Gambit

White – Black

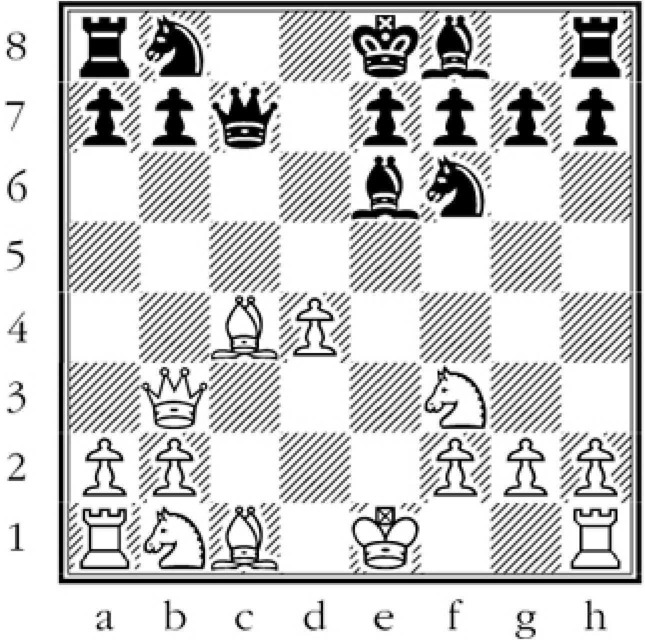
1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 c5 5.Bxc4 cxd4 6.exd4 Qc7?

This premature development of the queen is definitely out of place, as White has many ways to defend his attacked bishop.

White deliberately selects a method that will provoke an unsound counterattack by Black.

7.Qb3! Be6??

The very move that White wanted to provoke! Black is under the impression that White cannot capture this bishop because of the reply …Qxc1+, winning at least a piece. (D)



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White is about to give Black an unpleasant surprise!

8.Bxe6!! Qxc1+ 9.Ke2 Qxh1 10.Bxf7+ Kd8 11.Qxb7 Qc1 12.Qxa8! Qxb2+ 13.Nbd2 Ne4

Now the full depth of White's plan is revealed.

Black's last move is a shamefaced admission that his counterattack has misfired. In reply to 13…Qxa1 there follows 14.Qxb8+ Kd7 15.Ne5#. The move actually chosen is not much of a help, either.

14.Qxe4 Qxa1 15.Qd5+ Kc7 16.Qc5+ Kd8 17.Be6 Black resigns.

For if 17…Nd7 18.Qc6 Nb6 19.Ne5 followed by 20.Nf7#.

From these games we can see that premature counterattack by Black generally takes the form of early queen development. Once this happens, White can generally entice the black queen far afield. If this requires substantial offers of material, don't shrink from making them – *provided you can see genuine compensation to reward your sacrifices.*

Chapter Six

How to Exploit Black’s Weakening Pawn Moves

This is a very profitable subject. Familiarity with it will yield you many victories. This is why:

When your opponent weakens his position with ill-judged pawn moves, he obviously does not know such moves are weakening. If he had that knowledge, he would of course avoid the pawn moves.

Hence it follows that once Black has weakened his position, he has left himself wide open to powerful moves by which you can take advantage of his weakness. The following games tell you what you need to know in order to take advantage of weakening pawn moves.

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.exd5 Nxd5 5.Ne4 f5? 6.Ng5! Be7 7.N5f3 c6 8.Ne5

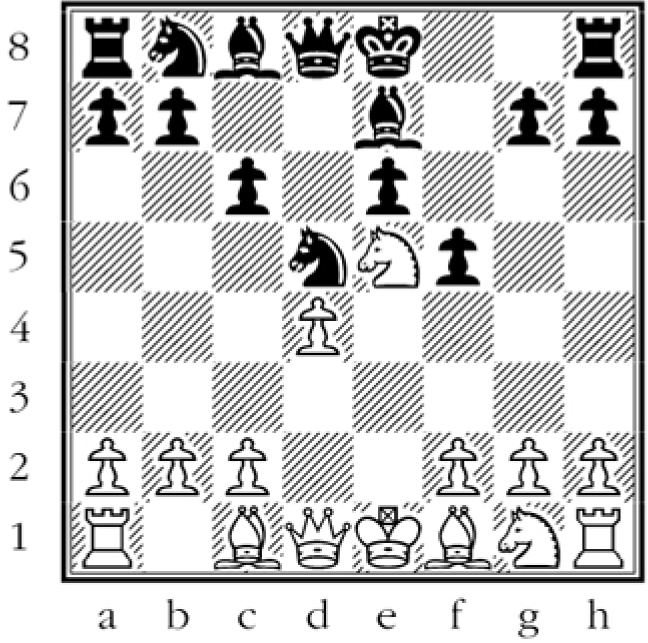
Black’s weakening pawn advance at move 5 has ruined his position. This move has left a backward pawn on the e-file: the black e-pawn cannot be defended by pawns.

White exploits this by posting his queen or a rook – or both – on the e-file.

Equally disastrous for Black is the fact that Black’s fifth move has left his e5-square a “hole” – a square that Black can no longer protect by pawn moves.

This makes it possible for White to occupy the “hole” with a knight. *Posting a knight on a vital center square* in this fashion is one of the strongest possible moves on the chessboard.

In this first part of the game, White has succeeded in bringing a knight to the important square. The second part of the game will show you what happens as the result of White's aggressive placement of the knight. (D)



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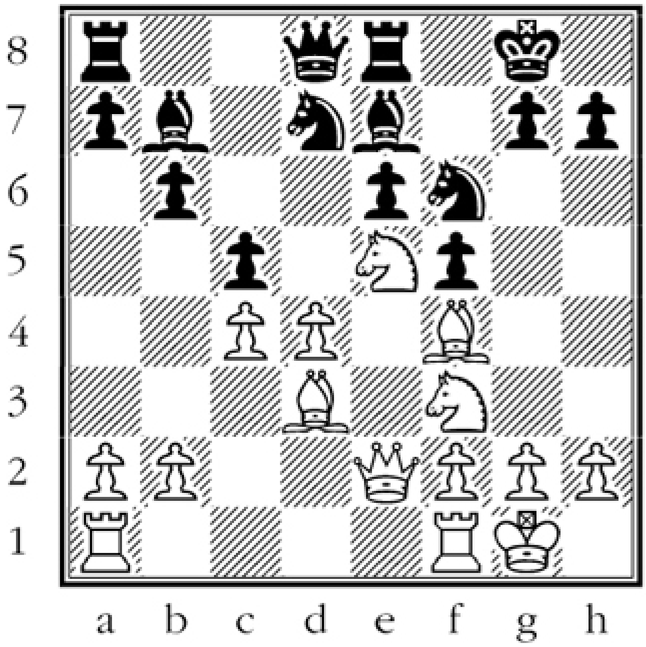
White controls the center as a result of Black's faulty fifth move.

8…0-0 9.Ngf3 b6 10.Bd3 Bb7 11.0-0 Re8 12.c4 Nf6 13.Bf4 Nbd7

White's ninth and 13th moves have both strengthened his powerful hold on the center. He continues that policy with his next move – a very important one, as we shall see.

14.Qe2 c5 (D)



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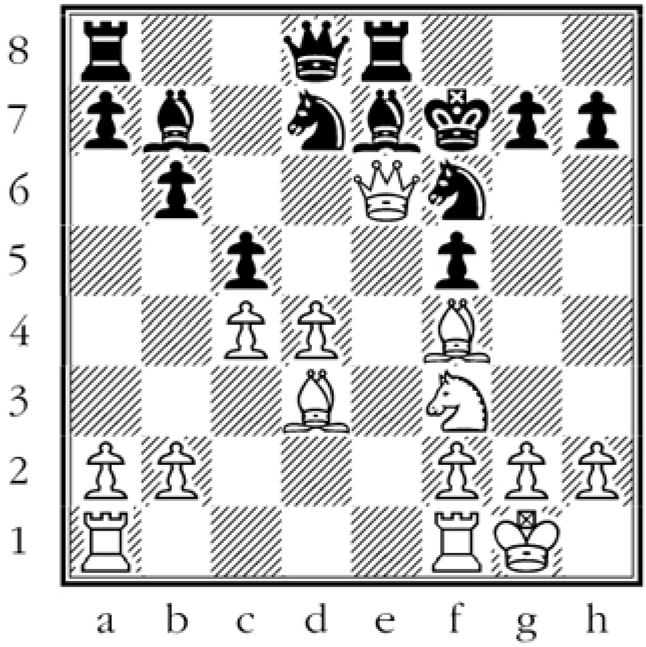
White now plays one of the most surprising moves ever made on the chessboard.

15.Nf7!!!

White has not left Black much choice in replying to this amazing move. If he removes his queen from attack by playing 15…Qc8, White replies 16.Qxe6, confiscating the e-pawn. (This is the pawn weakened by Black’s feeble fifth move.) After this capture, White is threatening a murderous double check. If Black tries 16…Kf8 17.N7g5 is decisive.

15…Kxf7 16.Qxe6+!!! (D)



49

White has captured the weak e-pawn in spectacular fashion.

Black’s weakening move now leads to his downfall. If 16…Kxe6 17.Ng5#!. This possibility vividly illustrates White’s powerful control of the center. Refusing the queen by 16…Kf8 is futile, for then White plays 17.Ng5 with crushing effect.

Black tries another way, but White forces mate in two moves.

16…Kg6 17.g4! Be4 18.Nh4#

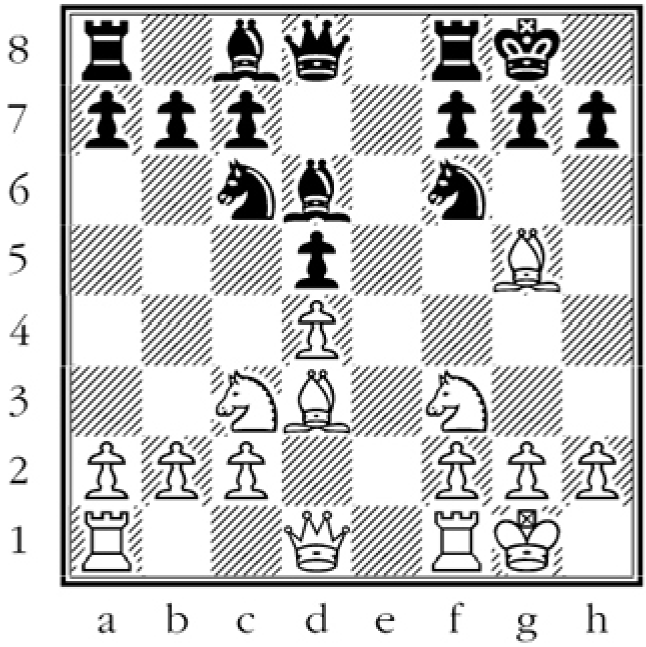
The way in which White exploited the weakening of Black’s pawn position was very instructive. In the next game White does an equally good job of taking advantage of a pawn weakness created by Black.

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.exd5 exd5 5.Nf3 Bd6 6.Bd3 0-0 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Bg5

By pinning Black’s king knight, White threatens Nxd5. (D)



50

White has given Black a troublesome problem: how is he to defend his d-pawn?

8…Ne7??

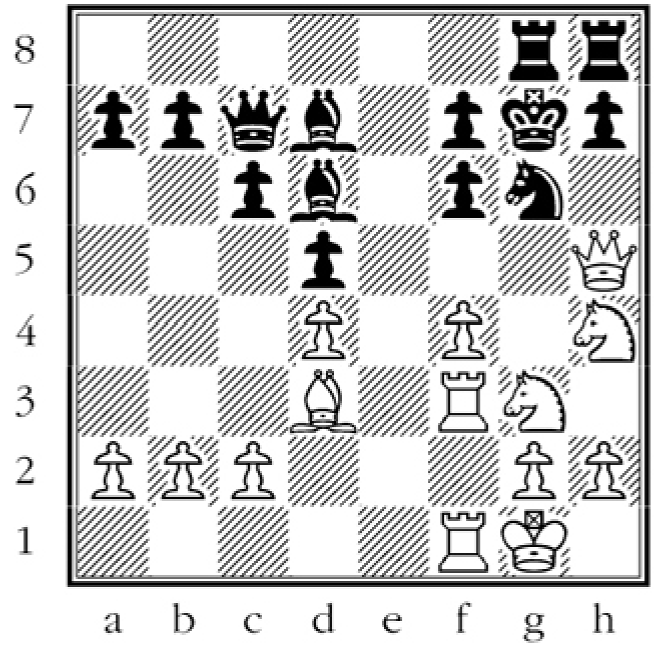
Black’s best way to meet the threat is 8…Bg4, counterattacking against White’s d-pawn.

9.Bxf6 gxf6 10.Nh4! Kg7 11.Qh5!

Black’s faulty eighth move has breached his kingside pawn position. White naturally trains his guns on the gap in Black’s castled position.

It is clear that White is taking admirable advantage of the opportunities offered. He has brought a knight and the queen into aggressive play. From now on, White keeps bringing more and more pieces to the kingside. In this way White builds up an imposing concentration of force against the black king.

11…Rh8 12.f4 c6 13.Rf3 Ng6 14.Raf1 Qc7 15.Ne2! Bd7 16.Ng3 Rag8 (D)



51

White’s concentration of force on the king-side is so overwhelming that he can afford to sacrifice his queen.

To appreciate White’s brilliant combination, bear in mind that it is based on Black’s *weakening of his pawn position.*

17.Qh6+!!! Kxh6 18.Nhf5+ Bxf5 19.Nxf5+ Kh5 20.g4+! Kxg4 21.Rg3+ Kh5 22.Be2#

Striking as this combination is, what really interests us is that White did a masterly job in taking advantage of the gap in Black’s kingside.

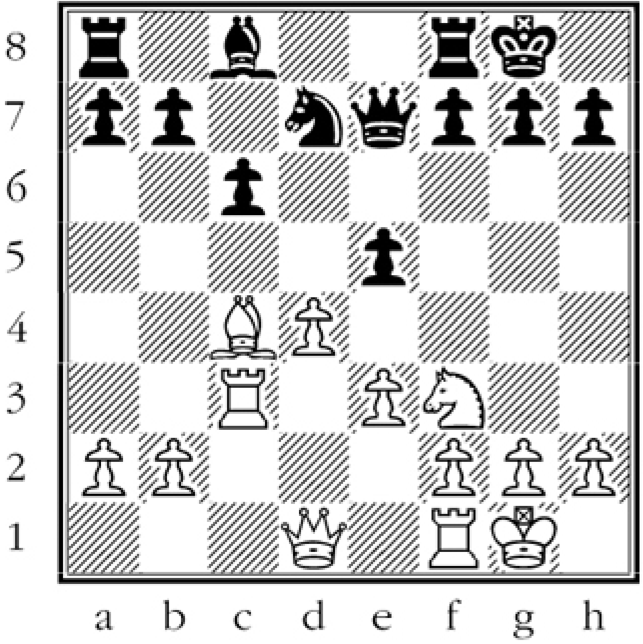
In the next game, White shows equal skill in exploiting the same kind of weakness in Black’s kingside.

Queen’s Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Rc1 c6 8.Bd3 dxc4 9.Bxc4 Nd5 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.0-0 Nxc3 12.Rxc3 e5

Starting out with a cramped position – the kind we have studied in Chapter Three – Black has worked hard to free himself. (D)



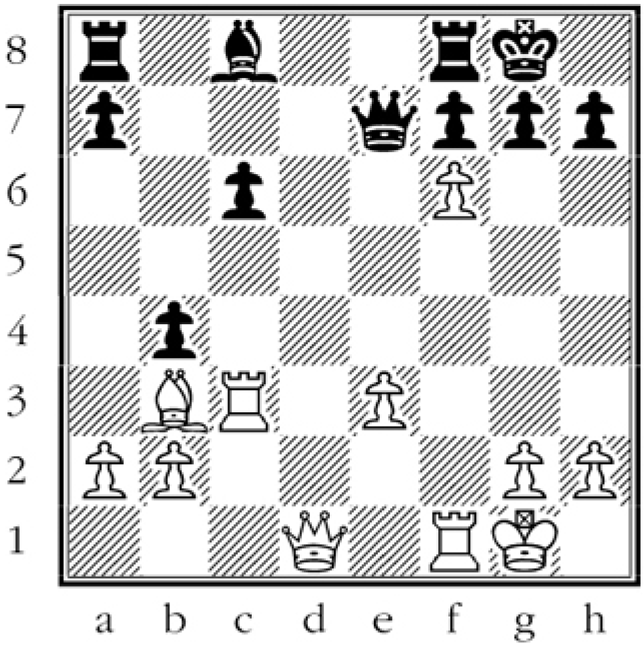
52

White must be extremely alert now to maintain some initiative.

13.Nxe5 Nxe5 14.dxe5 Qxe5 15.f4 Qe7?

Black should have played 15…Qf6.

16.f5 b5 17.Bb3 b4 18.f6! (D)



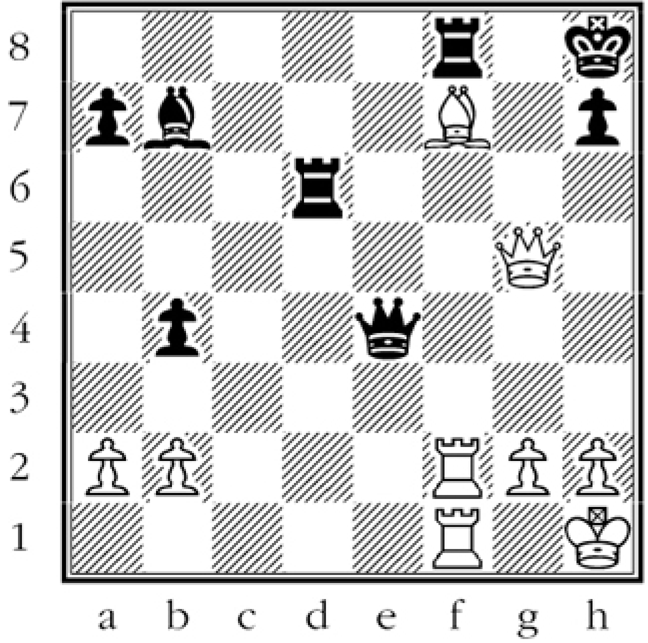
53

White has put his finger on the weakness created by Black's faulty 15th move. White's advance of the f-pawn opens up a dangerous gap on the kingside. From now on, White concentrates his forces more and more powerfully against Black's king.

Note that this process of gathering concentration is typical. First, you pinpoint the weakness. Second, you switch your forces to bear on the weakened point. Third, you deploy your superior forces to crush Black's weakened resistance.

18…gxf6 19.Rxc6 Qxe3+ 20.Kh1 Bb7 21.Rcxf6 Qe4 22.Qd2 Kh8 23.Bxf7 Rac8 24.R6f2 Rcd8 25.Qg5! Rd6

White has skillfully brought his pieces to bear on the exposed black king. His last move threatened 26.Qf6#. (D)



White's magnificently posted pieces are poised for the final attack.

26.Bd5!! Black resigns.

A brilliant final move. White offers his bishop three ways and attacks three pieces. Black cannot guard his attacked rook and attacked queen at the same time and he must therefore resign.

An interesting possibility is 26…Rxf2 so that if 27.Rxf2??? Qe1+ leads to mate. However, on 26…Rxf2 White plays 27.Qg8#

In the next game Black weakens his light squares. White's exploitation of this weakness is a masterpiece of positional maneuvering.

Ruy Lopez

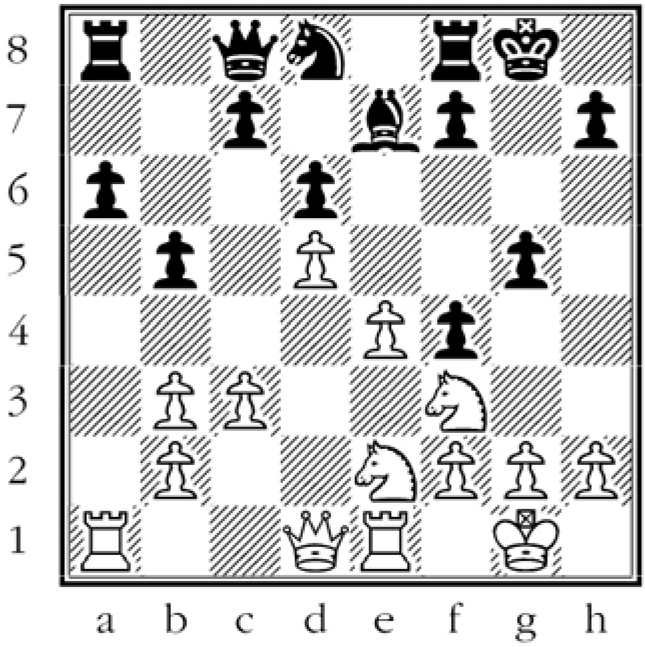
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.d3 Be6 10.Nbd2 Nh5 11.d4! Bxb3 12.axb3

Black's game is somewhat cramped but it is free from weaknesses. As in the previous game, White must be alert for opportunities to preserve some initiative.

12…Nf4 13.Nf1 Qc8? 14.Ng3 g6 15.d5! Nd8 16.Bxf4! exf4 17.Ne2 g5

One glance at Diagram 55 shows that White's 16th move was a masterpiece. (D)



55

White has his strategic goal clearly laid out for him: Black is now very weak on the light squares.

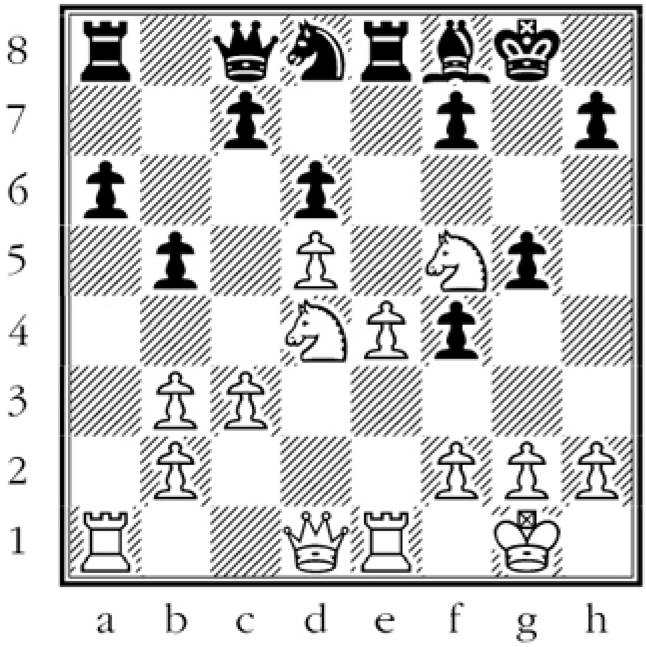
Black made a mistake in allowing his knight to be exchanged. White showed masterly judgment in making this exchange, which compels 17…g5 on the following move.

What White has achieved is that a number of light squares in Black's position are no longer protected by black pawns. White's success is particularly notable because of his control and coming occupation of the f5-square.

White’s interpolation of 15.d5!! was another admirable stroke. He drove back Black’s knight at a time when the knight had to retreat to d8. At this post the knight is badly out of play, which will handicap Black in the coming phase.

As we know from previous games, White’s next step is *to concentrate his forces for attack.* He devotes his next three moves to posting his knights aggressively and unassailably.

18.Nfd4 Re8 19.Nf5 Bf8 20.Ned4 (D)



56

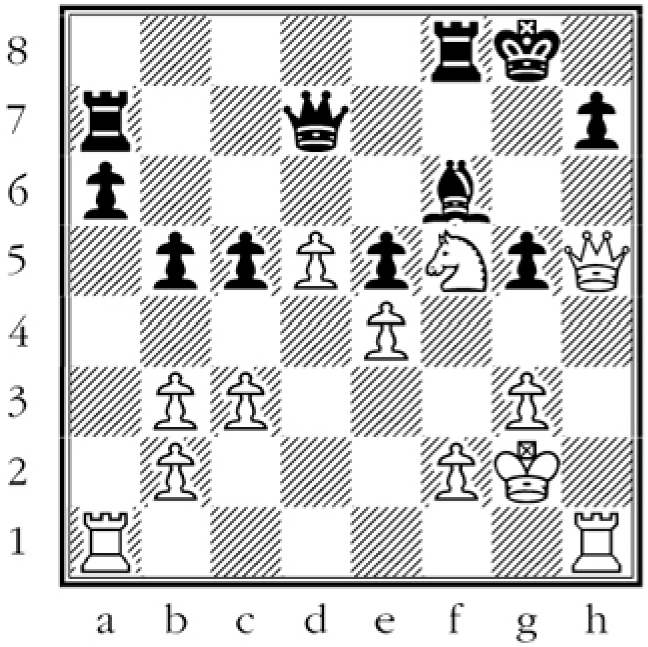
Neither of White’s powerfully posted knights can be driven away.

Now that White has established his knights firmly, his next step is to open the h-file. This will enormously increase the attacking potential of his position.

20…f6 21.g3! fxg3 22.hxg3 c5 23.Nf3 Nf7

White has purposely retreated his knight because he intends to use it for his kingside attack. The next stage in White’s build-up of pressure is to attack on the newly opened h-file.

24.Nh2! Ra7 25.Qh5 Bg7 26.Ng4 Qd7 27.Kg2 Ne5 28.Nxd6! Rd8 29.Nxe5 fxe5 30.Nf5 Bf6 31.Rh1 Rf8 (D)



57

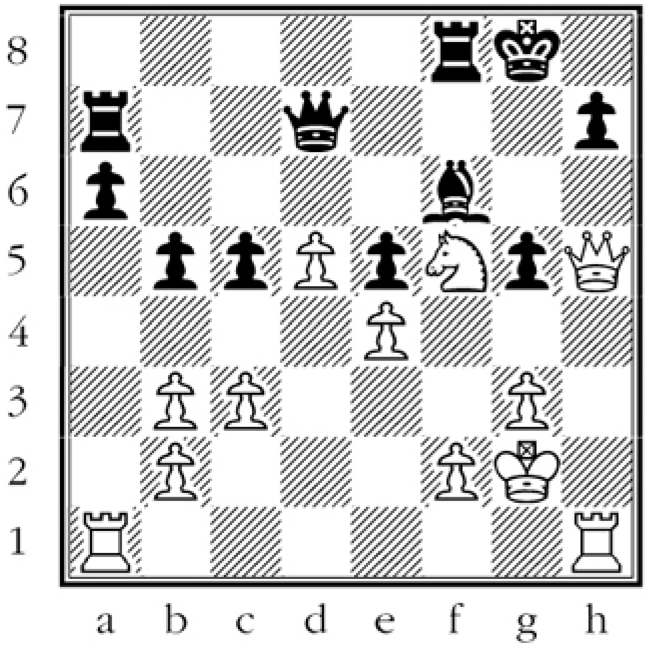
White is now ready for the final attack.

32.Qg4!

White proceeds with the final regrouping of his forces. The immediate threat is 33.Rxa6! Rxa6 34.Nh6+, winning Black’s queen!

32…Kh8 33.Rh6 a5 34.Ne3! Qe8 35.Rah1 Rff7 36.Qf5 Qf8 37.Ng4 Bd8

White now announced mate in three moves: 38.Rxh7+ Kg8 and now 39.Qg6+ and 40.Rh8#.



57

The way that White broke through on the open h-file from the position of Diagram 57 is most instructive. Looking back over the earlier part of the game, you can appreciate the importance of his opening of the h-file by 21.g3!. You can also see how useful it was for White to force the weakening of the light squares by 16.Bxf4!.

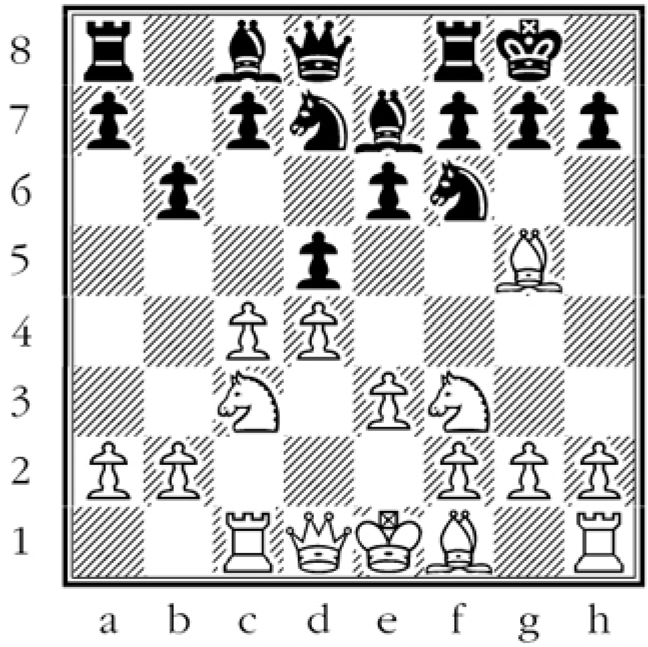
This game is particularly valuable because White has done such a convincing job in exploiting the weaknesses in Black's position. Unlike most of the games in this book, the game had very little in the way of brilliancy. Yet White was in full command of the situation; he pushed his advantage to the utmost.

So far in this chapter we have been studying White's procedure against weaknesses on Black's kingside or in the neighborhood of his king. But weaknesses on the queenside, far away from the king, can also be disastrous. Here is an impressive example.

Queen's Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 Be7 5.Bg5 Nbd7 6.e3 0-0 7.Rc1 b6 (D)



58

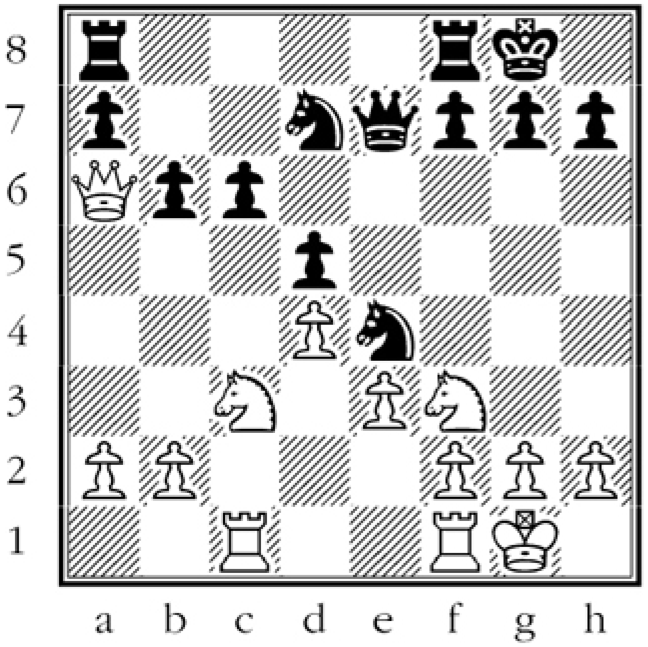
White has a marked positional advantage because Black has created a “hole” at c6, which can no longer be protected by a pawn.

White now sets himself to take advantage of the weakness at c6. Here is White’s plan of campaign:

First he plays cxd5 in order to clear the c-file for pressure by his queen rook against the weakened point. (Later on you will be able to appreciate the power of this pressure.) White’s next step will be to exchange the light-square bishops. In this way he will eliminate the black bishop which would have been able to protect the weakened point.

8.cxd5! exd5 9.Qa4! Bb7 10.Ba6! Bxa6 11.Qxa6 c6 12.0-0 Ne4 13.Bxe7 Qxe7

White's plans have proceeded according to schedule. Black's weakened c6 has been replaced by a weak c-pawn, and White now turns his attention to this pawn. (D)



59

White is now ready to pounce on the weak pawn.

14.Qb7! Rfc8 15.Nxd5! Qd6

After 15…cxd5 16.Rxc8+ White is the exchange and a pawn ahead, with an easy win.

16.Rxc6!! Black resigns.

White's last move is a brilliant stroke which wins more material than Black can afford to part with. For if 16…Qxd5? 17.Rxc8+ wins the queen.

And if 16…Rxc6 17.Qxa8+ Nf8 18.Qxc6!! Qxc6 19.Ne7+ followed by 20.Nxc6 leaves White a rook ahead.

Finally, if 16…Qxc6? 17.Ne7+ wins the queen.

In this game White carried out his strategical ideas with attacking moves. In the final game of the chapter he operates with strictly strategic methods. While less spectacular, this policy is equally effective.

Queen's Gambit Declined

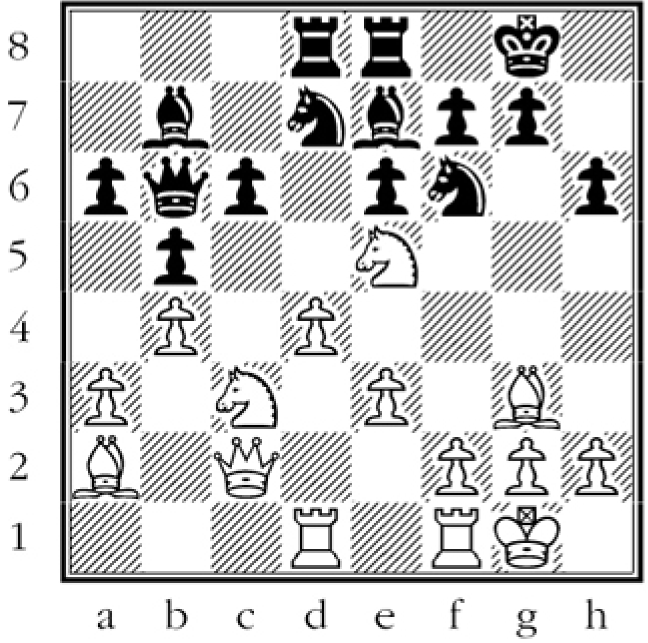
White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 Be7 5.Bg5 0-0 6.Qc2 Nbd7

Even at this early stage White has an inkling of what course the game may take. Black's light square bishop is badly hemmed in. White must keep a sharp eye on that bishop in the hope of keeping the bishop tied up permanently.

7.Rd1 c6 8.e3 h6 9.Bh4 a6 10.a3 Re8 11.Bg3 dxc4 12.Bxc4 b5 13.Ba2 Qb6 14.0-0 Bb7 15.Ne5 Rad8? 16.b4!!

White takes advantage of Black's faulty 15th move. Black should have freed his lightsquare bishop with 15…c5. (D)



60

White now has a winning positional advantage.

With his last move White has established a lasting bind on the position. By preventing …c5 for good, he has stamped Black's c-pawn as *a backward pawn on an open file.* In all the intricate maneuvering that follows, White keeps his eye on this pawn and finally piles up enough force to capture it.

But White enjoys still another advantage after 16.b4!!. He keeps Black's light-square bishop hemmed in for good. This means that to all intents and purposes White is playing with a piece ahead.

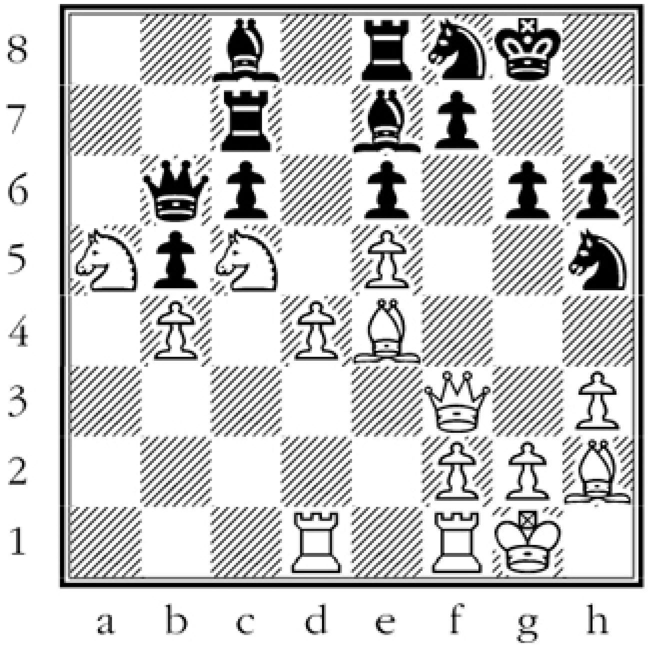
16…a5 17.Nd3! axb4 18.axb4 Ra8 19.Nc5 Nf8 20.Bb1 Bc8 21.h3 Nd5

Now that White has pinpointed the weakness, he goes on to the next phase: piling up on the weakness. First comes a very fine knight maneuver aimed at transferring his knight from c3 to a5. At this latter post the white knight will bear down on the weak c-pawn.

22.Na2! Ra7 23.e4 Nf6 24.Nc1 N6d7 25.N1b3 Nf6 26.Na5 Nh5 27.Bh2 g6

White has posted his knights to the best advantage. His next four moves lead to the capture of the weak pawn.

28.Qc3! Bf6 29.e5! Be7 30.Be4! Rc7 31.Qf3! (D)



61

White must now win the weak c-pawn.

31…Bd7 32.Nxd7 Nxd7 33.Nxc6 Bf8 34.d5! Nb8 35.dxe6! Nxc6 36.Bxc6 Rxe6

If Black captures the bishop, the reply 37.exf7+ is deadly. White has achieved his aim. He now goes on to make use of his superior mobility.

37.Bd5! Ng7 38.Bxe6 Nxe6 39.Rd6! Bxd6 40.exd6 Rd7 41.Rd1 Kh7 42.Be5 Qa6 43.Ra1 Qc8 44.Ra8 Qc1+ 45.Kh2 f6 46.Qxf6 Ng7 47.Qf8 g5 48.Bxg7! Black resigns.

After 48…Rxg7 White mates by 49.Qf5+ Rg6 50.Ra7+ Kh8 51.Qf8+! etc.

The games in this chapter give us a very clear and thorough method for White’s procedure against weaknesses. The earlier White recognizes these weaknesses, the better for him. Even at a very early stage of the game, they give him a target to aim at; they provide a complete plan of the game. Once the target is created, White need not drift or guess; by concentrating on the target, he is playing the strongest and most logical moves.

Chapter Seven

How to Exploit Black's Errors of Judgment

Errors of judgment, like weakening moves, enable you to train your forces on a target. Errors of judgment on Black's part provide you with a ready-made plan of attack.

However, you have to be alert to note these errors of judgment. If the lapse is ignored, Black may possibly escape without serious damage. In each of the following games White is well aware of the lapse as soon as it happens, and vigorously turns it to his advantage.

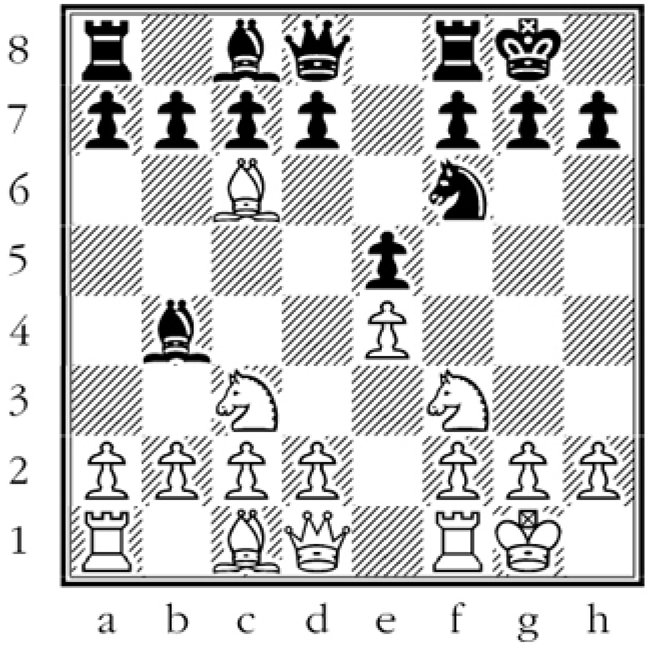
In the first game, Black makes a plausible move that ruins his chances of achieving a normal development. White's method of exploiting this error of judgment is simple but highly effective.

The simplifying variation White adopts in the game is rather deceptive. Black is set for an easy game, but White knows how to create unexpected difficulties.

Four Knights' Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bb4 5.0-0 0-0 6.Bxc6 (D)



62

White will get his big opportunity as Black proceeds to make an error of judgment.

6…bxc6

By capturing with the d-pawn, Black opens up a line of development for his light-square bishop.

The text, on the contrary, block's the bishop's development.

Here White sees his chance – *to make use of the superiority in development that he is bound to obtain because Black's light-square bishop is immobilized.*

7.Nxe5 Re8 8.d4 Bxc3 9.bxc3 Nxe4 10.Re1!

Very powerful. White's rook move creates serious difficulties for Black. If 10…Nf6 11.Bg5 gives White a lasting and annoying pin. If 10…Nxc3 11.Qf3 and White attacks the knight and also threatens Qxf7+.

10…Nd6

Now Black's d-pawn cannot move, and it is not clear how his bishop is to be developed. Credit this to White's pressing rook move. White has made important progress by ruining Black's prospects of development.

In the following stage White builds up strong pressure on the kingside, which lacks proper protection.

11.Qg4! Qf6

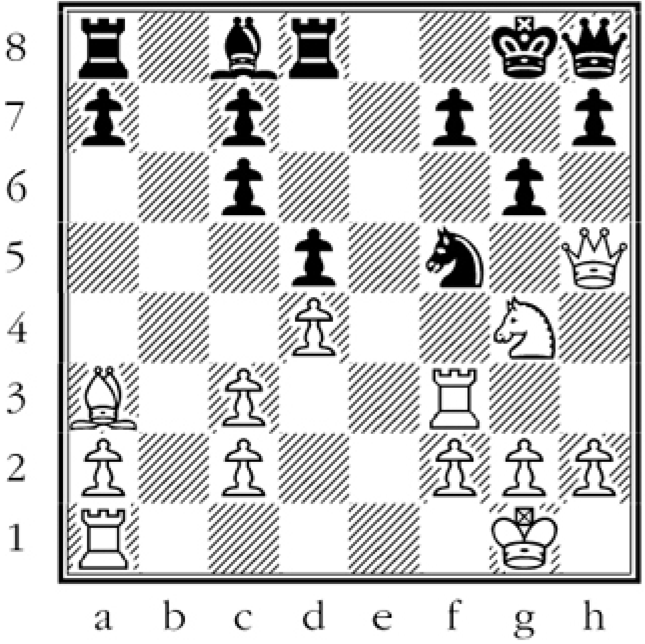
If 11…f6 12.Bh6 g6 13.Nxg6! and White wins.

12.Ba3 Rd8 13.Re3!

While Black works hard to unscramble his pieces, White increases his pressure on the kingside. Note the helplessness of Black's bishop.

13…Nf5 14.Rf3 d5 15.Qh5 g6 16.Ng4! Qh8

A queer-looking move, but White has the whip-hand in any event because of his powerful accumulation of forces on the kingside. (D)



63

White’s lead in development is now decisive.

17.Qg5 Be6 18.Rxf5! Black resigns.

For if 18…Bxf5 19.Nh6+ Kg7 20.Nxf5+ Kg8 21.Be7 threatening to win the queen with 22.Bf6 or to win a rook with 22.Bxd8.

White timed his play perfectly to take advantage of Black’s error of judgment on move 6. By continuing to pile on pressure relentlessly on the kingside, White emphasized the backwardness of Black’s development.

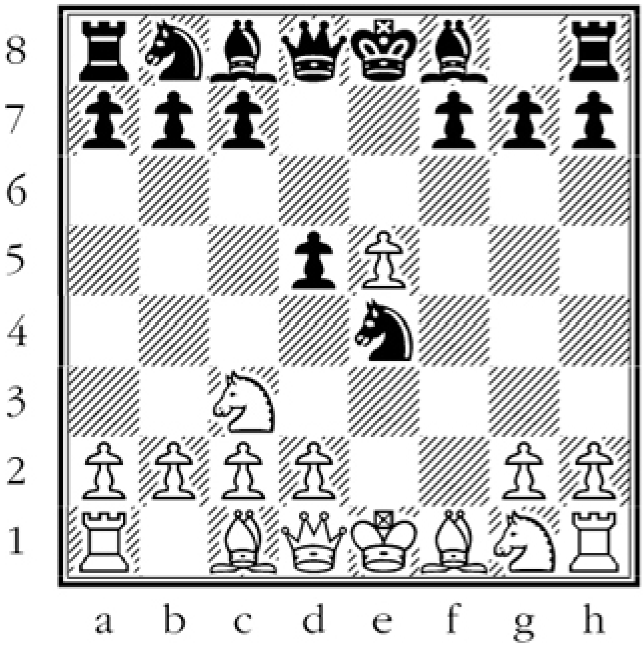
In the next game White deals with a somewhat different kind of error on Black’s part. Starting out with a reasonably satisfactory development, Black undermines the position of his most effective piece.

White must ask himself such questions as: Where is Black’s error of judgment? How can I take advantage of that error?

Vienna Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.fxe5 Nxe4 (D)



64

White must contend with a powerfully centralized black knight.

At a very early stage in the game, White has a serious problem: what is he to do about the effectively posted black knight in the center? Exchanging knights is not aggressive enough, so White spars for time.

5.Nf3 Bb4 6.Qe2 Bxc3 7.bxc3 0-0 8.Qe3 Nc6 9.Bd3 f5 10.0-0 f4

A critical move which unhinges the support of Black’s well-posted knight.

11.Qe2 Ng5?

This is the mistake White has been waiting for. The centralized knight leaves his powerful post. At the same time Black’s far advanced f-pawn becomes an exposed weakness. 11…Bf5 supports the well-posted knight.

12.Ba3! Nxf3+ 13.Qxf3! Rf7

White is playing with superb tactical skill. In reply to 13…Nxe5 he plays 14.Qh5, attacking the knight, threatening Bxh7+ with a mating menace, and keeping Black’s rook under attack.

14.Rae1

White’s alert play has brought all his pieces into powerful play. His bishops are magnificently trained for attack. Thus, if now 14…Be6 (to hold back the threatening e-pawn) White continues 15.Qh5 g6 16.Bxg6! hxg6 17.Qxg6+ winning the bishop with two pawns to the good.

14…g5

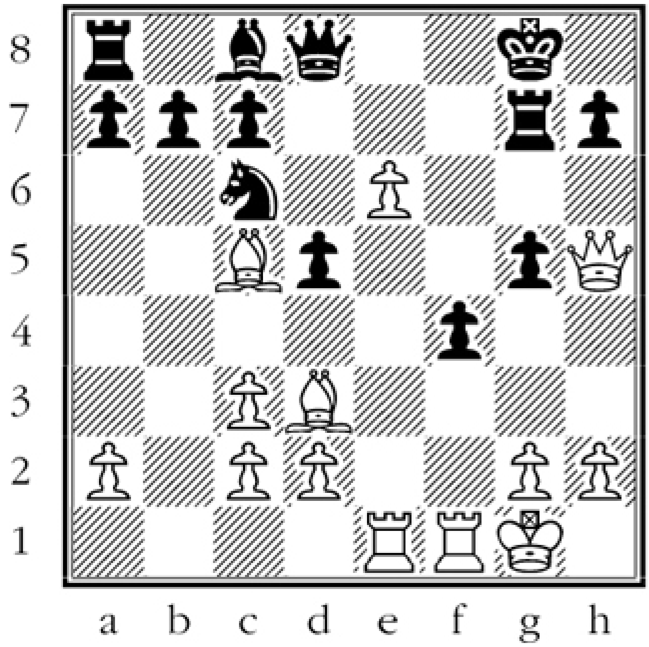
To guard the advanced f-pawn and to defend the h-pawn against Qh5. But White has all the play and now forces the game in a few moves.

15.e6 Rg7 16.Qh5!

Now White has the brutal threat of 17.e7! Nxe7 18.Bxe7 Rxe7 19.Qxg5+ Kf8 20.Rxf4+ Ke8 21.Qg8+ Kd7 22.Qxd5+ Ke8 23.Rf8+!.

16…Ne7 17.Bc5! Nc6

He cannot allow White to play Bd4. (D)



65

White crowns his masterly attack by breaking up Black's position.

18.e7! Nxe7 19.Bxe7 Black resigns.

If 19…Rxe7 20.Qxg5+ and White wins as in the note to White's 16th move.

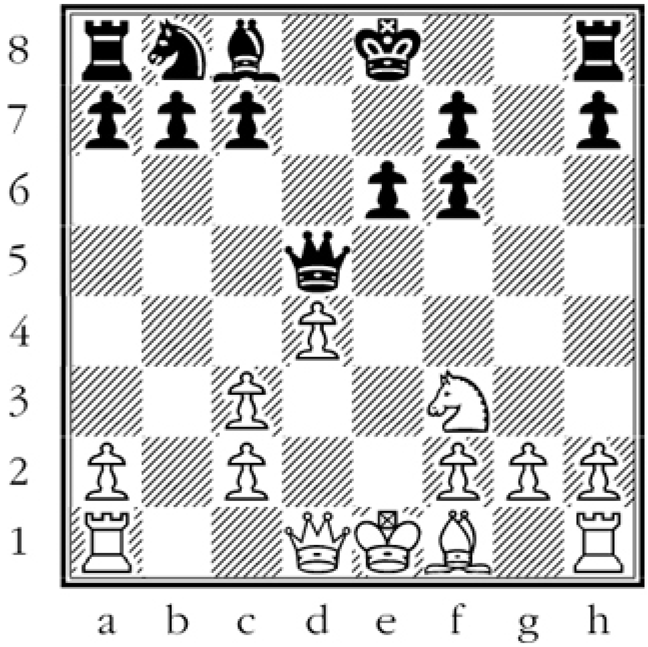
This game is extremely impressive because of the way that White worked up a devastating attack after Black's error of judgment. The removal of Black's knight from the center opened up the lines that White needed for the effective cooperation of his forces.

In the next game, a wrong opening choice by Black leaves him exposed to White's tactical threats. White maneuvers very cleverly to take advantage of the opportunities offered.

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4 5.exd5 Qxd5 6.Bxf6 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 gxf6 8.Nf3 (D)



66

In order to drive away Black’s queen from an effective centralized post, White plans to play g3 followed by Bg2 with threats against the black queen.

8…b6 9.g3 Bb7 10.Bg2 Qh5?

White threatened 11.Nh4 with decisive effect. Black has avoided this threat, but he has put his queen out of play. White will make good use of the queen’s inactive role.

Black gets an equal game with 10…Qe4+, which practically forces White to agree to the exchange of queens by 11.Qe2 etc.

11.0-0 Nd7 12.Qe2 Rc8 13.Qe3! c5 14.Nh4! Bxg2 15.Nxg2 cxd4 16.cxd4

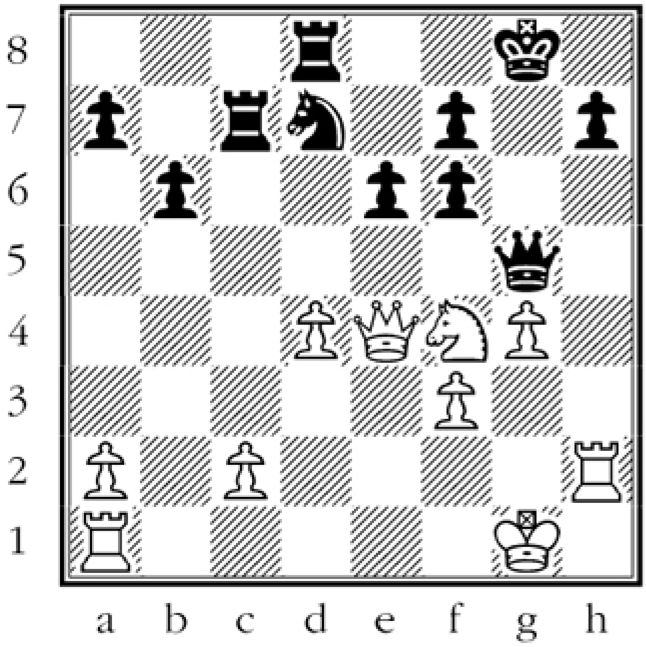
White’s pawn sacrifice is neatly calculated. After 16…Rxc2 17.Qa3!! a5 18.Rac1 Rxc1 19.Rxc1 White has reduced his opponent to helplessness. (White would then threaten Rc8#, and Black would be unable to castle out of danger.) In offering this variation, White relies on the inactive role of Black’s queen.

16…0-0 17.Qe4 Rc7 18.Nf4 Qg4 19.f3! Qg5 20.Rf2 Rd8 21.h4! Qh6

If 21…Qxg3+ 22.Rg2 pins and wins the queen.

White now begins a very ingenious maneuver to harry the black queen and at the same time to exploit the lack of harmony among Black's forces.

22.g4! Qxh4 23.Rh2 Qg5 (D)



67

After 23…Qg3+ 24.Kh1 White can confidently look forward to trapping the black queen.

White can capture the h-pawn, but he has an even stronger move.

24.Nxe6!! fxe6 25.Qxe6+

Now you can see how White's unexpected combination takes advantage of the lack of communication among Black's forces. If 25…Kf8 26.Qd6+ wins a rook. The same is true of 25…Kg7 26.Qe7+. Black tries a different defense, but White's superior mobility still tells in his favor.

25…Kh8 26.Qe7 Qg8 27.Rxh7+! Qxh7 28.Qxd8+ Nf8 29.Qxf8+ Qg8 30.Qxf6+ Black resigns.

White has succeeded admirably in carrying out his original aim of exploiting the lack of cooperation between Black's queen and his other pieces. Black's loss of material makes further resistance hopeless.

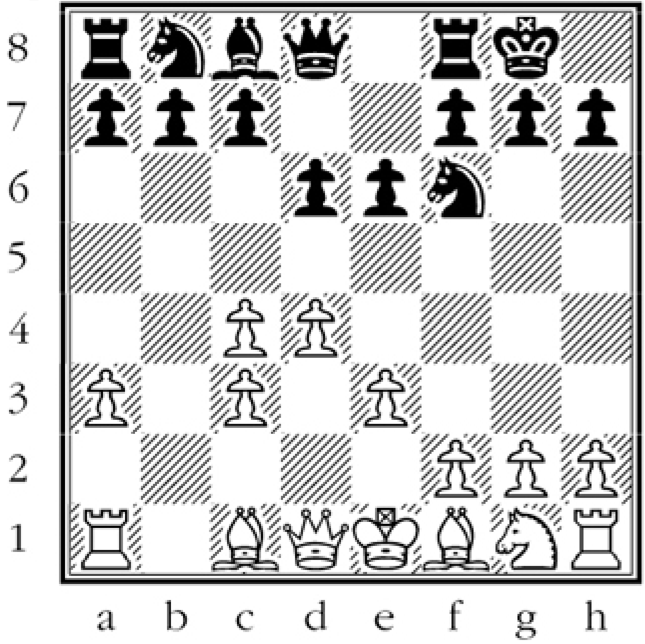
In the following game it is up to White to punish his opponent for a slight transposition of moves toward the beginning of the middle game. It is very instructive to see how White carries out this idea.

Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 0-0 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 d6

Here White faces the same kind of problem as in the play following Diagram 38. He wants open lines for his pieces – particularly the bishops – while Black's interests are best served by a closed position.



68

(D)

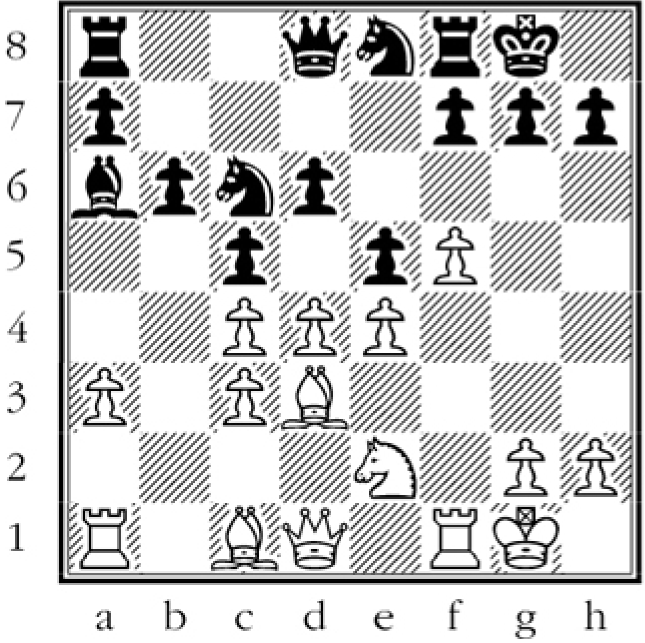
White needs open lines for his coming attack.

7.Bd3 c5 8.Ne2 Nc6 9.e4 Ne8! 10.0-0 b6 11.f4 Ba6?

By playing 11…f5! Black would have avoided the terrific attack that follows.

12.f5! e5

White has just the kind of position he was aiming for, thanks to Black’s carelessness at move 11. White can now force a breach in Black’s kingside position and just keep on piling up pressure against Black’s game. In this way he takes advantage of the fact that Black’s pieces are poorly placed for defensive purposes. (D)



69

White can force a weakness in Black’s kingside by a very surprising move.

13.f6!!

This amazing move breaks up Black’s kingside no matter how he plays.

13…Kh8

After 13…gxf6 14.Bh6 White has achieved his objective. Black’s kingside formation is then similar to the one in Diagram 51. The black king is exposed to attack, and White simply continues to bring additional pressure to bear. (The actual continuation of the game proceeds along similar lines.) If Black tries 13…Nxf6 White can still inflict the unwieldy doubled pawn on him by playing 14.Bg5. White would then have lasting pressure by means of the pin supported by his rook on the open f-file.

14.d5 Na5 15.Ng3!

White’s knight now comes into play very strongly. He is indifferent to the loss of a pawn by 15…Bxc4 16.Bxc4 Nxc4 for after 17.fxg7+ Nxg7 18.Bh6 his attack rolls on undiminished.

15…gxf6 16.Nf5 Bc8 17.Qh5 Bxf5 18.exf5 Rg8

To force a clearly winning position White only needs to bring his king rook into the attack.

This he now proceeds to do, applying the formula which has been used so often by White in these games. First he determines where the weakness lies; then he concentrates his forces on the weak spot; finally, he attacks in overwhelmingly superior strength.

In this case the weakness is Black's exposed kingside, *created by White's brilliant 13th move.*

19.Rf3!

Threatening mate in four moves beginning with 20.Qxh7+!!.

19…Rg7 20.Bh6 Rg8 21.Rh3 Ng7 22.Qh4! Black resigns.

Black is helpless against the coming 23.Bg5 h5 24.Qxh5+!! Nxh5 25.Rxh5+ Kg7 26.Bh6+ and mate next move.

The power of White's concluding attack has amply proved the correctness of White's judgment in making the surprising pawn advance on move 13.

In this last game, as in all the games in this chapter, we have seen how White takes advantage of Black's error of judgment. The important requirement, as far as White is concerned, is alertness. If White is watchful enough to see how Black's plans are spoiled by a hasty move, then that observation is half the battle.

Nor can White afford to be dogmatic. He applies whatever attacking methods are needed to refute Black's play, and he does not mind changing his plans as the occasion requires.

Thus, in this game, White wanted originally to get good attacking diagonals for both bishops. Yet after his 12th move White had to reconcile himself to the fact that that his light-square bishop was destined to play a minor role. There were two reasons why White accepted this philosophy.

In the first place, the pawn moves that shut in *this* bishop (9.e4 and 13.f6!!), opened the diagonal for White's dark-square bishop. Secondly, Black had so many inactive pieces that the blocking of the king bishop was of minor importance.

This kind of elasticity is an important quality in a chessplayer. We're often told that a plan is important; unfortunately, we hear less often that a plan needs modifying as the original conditions are modified. In all the games in this chapter, White is very sensitive to *the changes in Black’s policy that are the results of errors of judgment.* The result, as you have seen, is effective attack and quick victory.

Chapter Eight

Opening Mistakes White Should Avoid

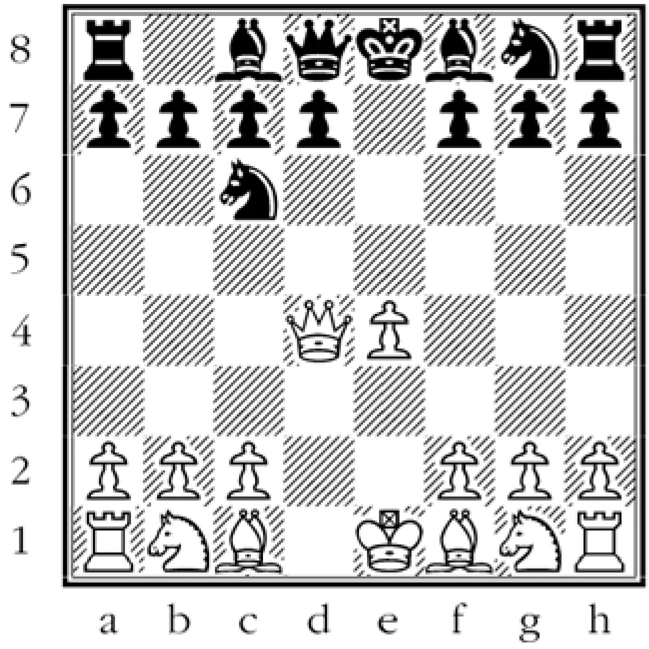
So far you have seen the methods by which White exploits Black's mistakes in the opening and the early middlegame. *These methods are valid and useful as long as White does not violate the rules of good opening play.*

It is therefore vital for you to be forewarned against the danger of losing the initiative when you play White.

This danger comes from neglect of your development. You may damage your development by losing time or by developing pieces inefficiently.

There are some openings in which the defects are so obvious that these openings have been partly or completely discredited. Many years ago, when opening theory was not so well understood as it is today, some of these openings were popular. In the course of time their serious defects became all too clear. Such openings are described in Chapter Nine, but here we want to emphasize several of them, pointing out their defects in some detail: The Center Game offers a good example. Here are the opening moves:

Center Game
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.Qxd4 Nc6 (D)



70

Black’s last move gains time by attacking the queen. White must now move the queen out of attack, giving Black another tempo for development. What usually happens is that White plays **4.Qe3** and Black replies **4…Nf6**, developing another piece.

To understand what has happened, you must realize that in effect *Black has taken over the role usually held by White.* It is no longer White who is a move ahead; Black has the initiative.

The same mistake on White’s part appears in milder form in the Scotch Game:

Scotch Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4

To advance in the center and to open up a line for the dark-square bishop seems very good on general principles. But the advance of the d-pawn is not well timed.

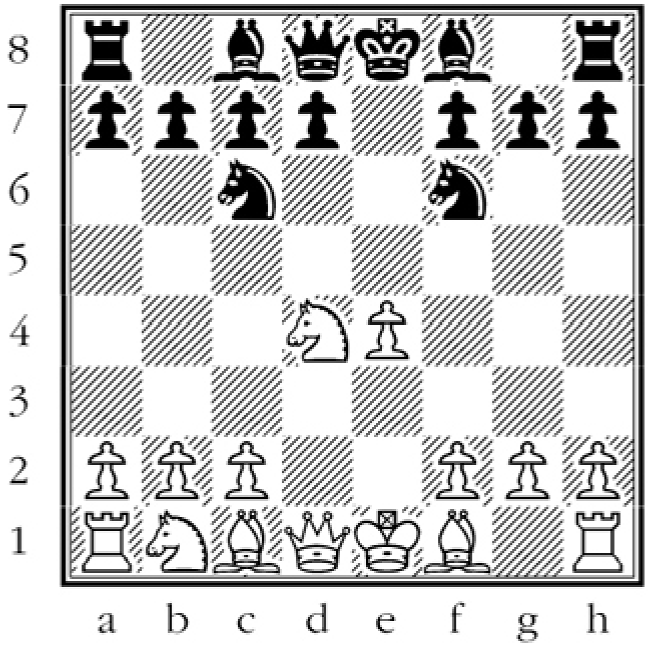
3…exd4 4.Nxd4

By recapturing, White moves his knight a second time and thus wastes a move.

Black, by way of reply, develops with gain of time. He can play 4…Bc5, developing a new piece and gaining time by threatening to win White’s knight.

Or Black can play 4…Nf6, likewise developing a new piece and gaining time by threatening to win White’s e-pawn.

4…Nf6 (D)



71

White is on the defensive; he must defend his e-pawn.

In this case White’s shortcomings are not fatal. However, any possibility of keeping Black’s position under pressure is gone.

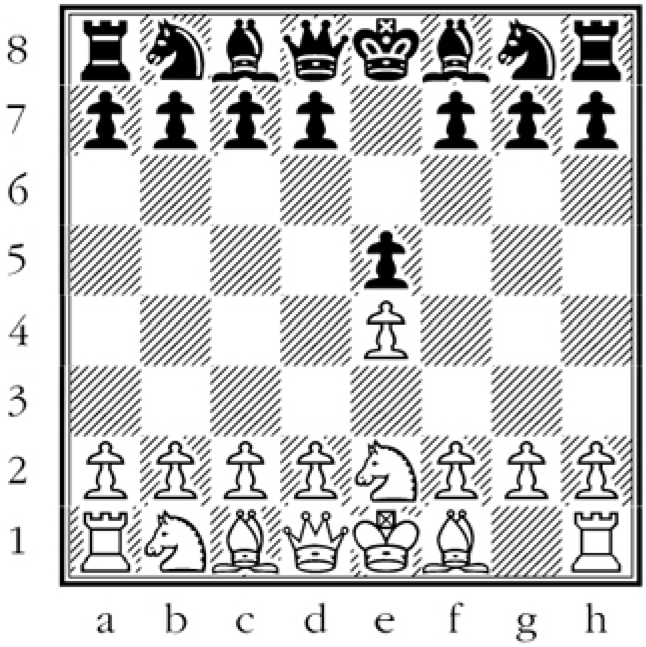
Another kind of mistake to avoid with the white pieces is to develop inefficiently. Note this in Alapin’s Opening: Alapin’s Opening

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Ne2

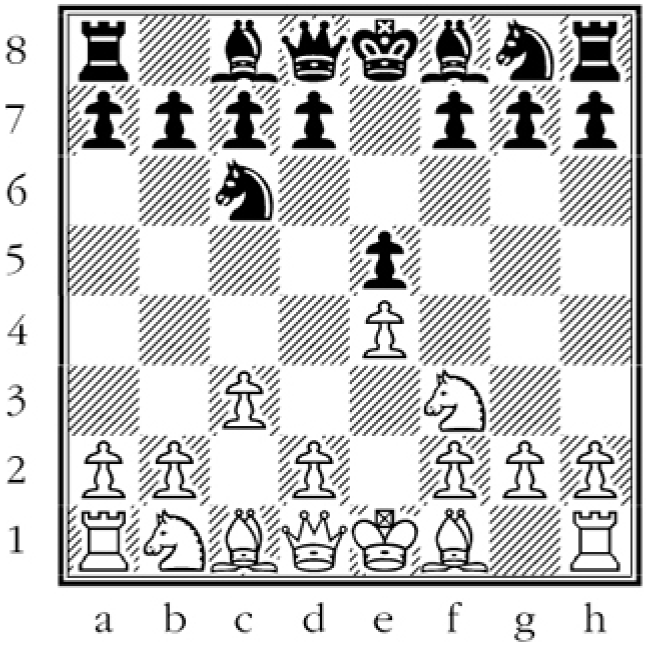
As you know, White almost invariably plays 2.Nf3. You may have wondered why White should not play 2.Ne2. There are two reasons for this: On e2 the knight blocks the development of White’s light-square bishop and thus holds up White’s whole development. Furthermore, 2.Ne2 is passive whereas 2.Nf3 is aggressive, attacking Black’s e-pawn.

In view of these defects, 2.Ne2 is ruled out as a worthwhile move. (D)


72

White’s last move was much too passive.
A similar example appears in the Ponziani Opening:

Ponziani Opening
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c3 (D)


73

White’s last move blocks his development.

White’s last move deprives his queen knight of its best square. Black replies 3…d5!, opening up the position favorably. After 4.exd5 Qxd5 White is unable to attack the black queen by 5.Nc3 because 3.c3 has made the knight move impossible.

As in the previous examples, Black has an easy time of it. Black has the initiative and has nothing to fear. From the positions discussed in this chapter, you can see that White must avoid *loss of time as well as ineffectual development.*

If White violates these simple rules, *he loses his chance to exploit Black’s mistakes in the opening.*

Book Four

How to Play the Black Pieces

Chapter One

How to Exploit White's Weaknesses

Because Black does not have the first move, we are prone to think of him as being forced onto the defensive from the very start. You often hear extreme views, expressed about "White's initiative" and "White's birthright of the first move."

You can be reassured about Black's chances from the very start. All the statistical analysis we have about the results of games show that Black breaks even or else is very slightly in the red.

In fact, some modern theorists went to the other extreme and announced ominously that "White's game is in its last throes!"

However, this is definitely going too far. All that we want to establish in this book is that *with best play on Black's part*, White's theoretical advantage will disappear with astonishing rapidity.

And remember this: all talk about White's theoretical advantage presupposes that White will play flawlessly – the first-class chess shown in *Third Book of Chess*, the previous book to this. In actual practice, White often goes wrong in one way or another, giving Black his chance to seize the initiative.

In this volume it is our purpose to study the ways in which Black seizes the initiative. We begin with his methods of exploiting weaknesses created by White.

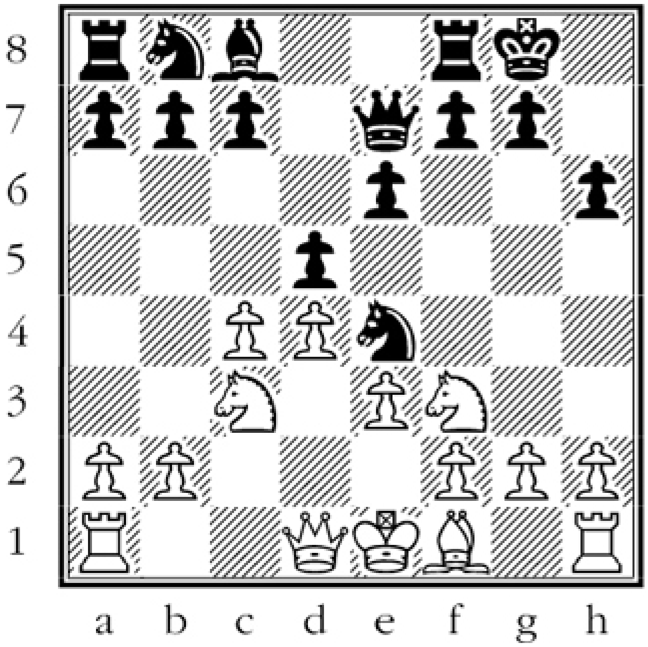
Weaknesses in the King's Position

It often happens that White, in his eagerness to press a real or imagined advantage, allows a weakness to be formed in his position. Black must be alert in observing such weaknesses and pouncing on them. The following two games show how it is done.

Queen's Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 0-0 6.Nf3 h6 7.Bh4 Ne4 8.Bxe7 Qxe7 (D)



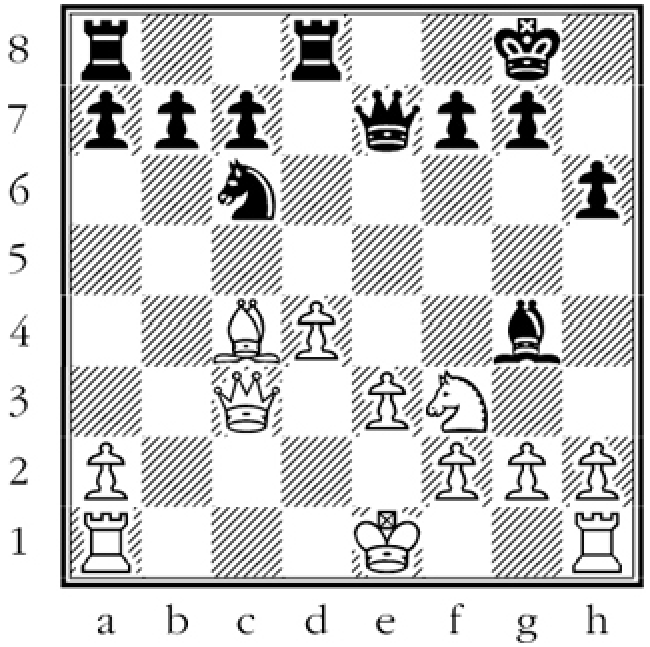
1

Black plays to simplify the position.

Black's handling of the opening deserves close study. His position is cramped, and his bishop on the light squares has no scope. He therefore exchanges some pieces in order to create elbow rook for his remaining forces.

In the position of Diagram 1 he has already achieved a promising set-up. Thus, if 9.Nxe4 dxe4 10.Nd2 e5! and Black actually wins a piece after 11.Nxe4? exd4 12.Qxd4?? Rd8 etc. (In any event, after 10…e5! Black has an open diagonal for his bishop.) Again, after 9.Bd3 Nxc3 10.bxc3 dxc4 Black has freed himself and can play …b6 and …Bb7 with a splendid diagonal for his bishop.

9.cxd5 Nxc3 10.bxc3 exd5 11.Qb3 Rd8 12.c4 dxc4 13.Bxc4 Nc6 14.Qc3 Bg4 (D)



2

Black is already operating with threats.

Black has achieved a splendid development, and White finds himself in difficulties. (Black's threat is 15…Bxf3 16.gxf3 Nxd4 – or 16…Rxd4.) White can meet the threat with 15.Nd2, but then he loses more time and allows Black to get further ahead in development. So White retreats his bishop, but Black has a brilliant resource in reserve.

15.Be2 Bxf3! 16.gxf3

The point of Black's exchange is that the seemingly safe 16.Bxf3 is answered by 16…Nxd4 17.Bxb7 Rab8! 18.Ba6 Qf6! (threatens …Nf3+ or …Nc2+) 19.exd4 Qxa6.

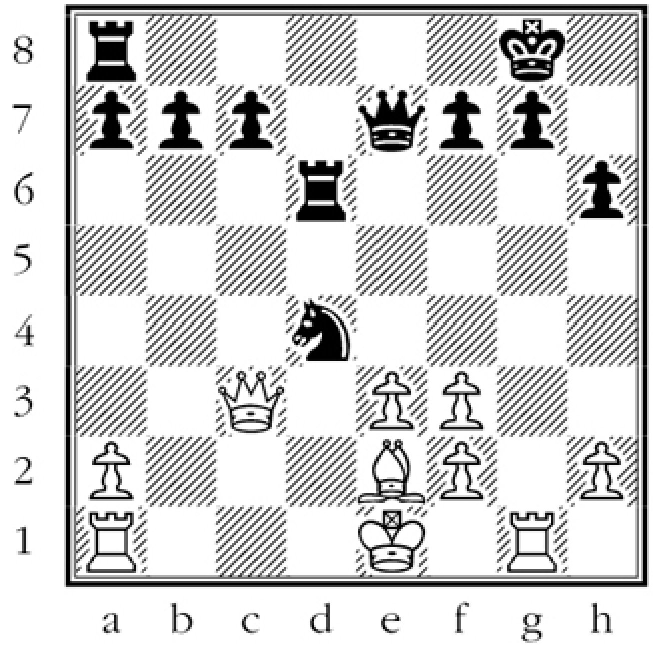
In that case, Black's command of the open lines would decide the game quickly in his favor.

16…Rd6 17.Rg1

White wants to attack! His threat is 18.d5 (menacing mate) 18…Ne5 19.f4 Ng6 (forced) 20.f5 Ne5 21.f4 winning the knight.

But Black has a masterly reply.

17…Nxd4!! (D)



Black is counterattacking.

The point of Black’s sacrifice is that if 18.exd4 Re8 19.Qe3 Re6 regaining the piece with a winning game.

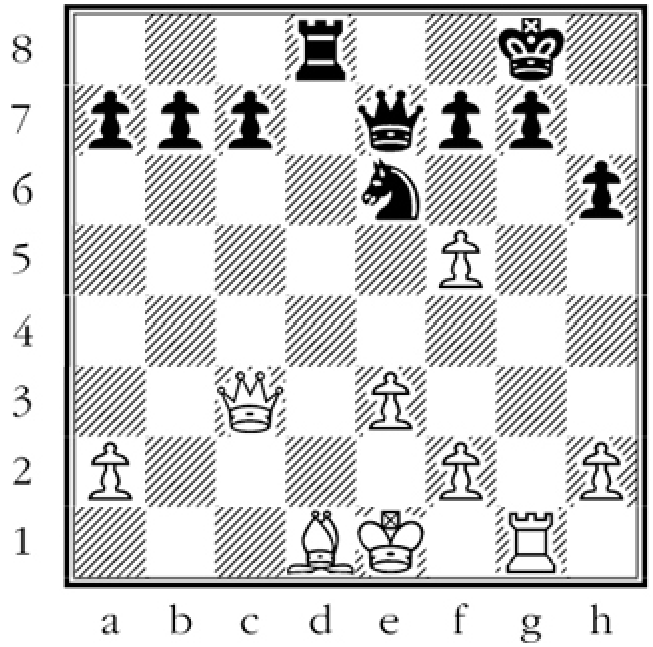
18.Rd1 Ne6 19.f4

Now Black must watch out for 20.f5 Ng5 21.h4, winning the knight because of the mating threat.

19…Rxd1+ 20.Bxd1 Rd8!

This looks like a blunder. It isn’t!

21.f5 (D)



4

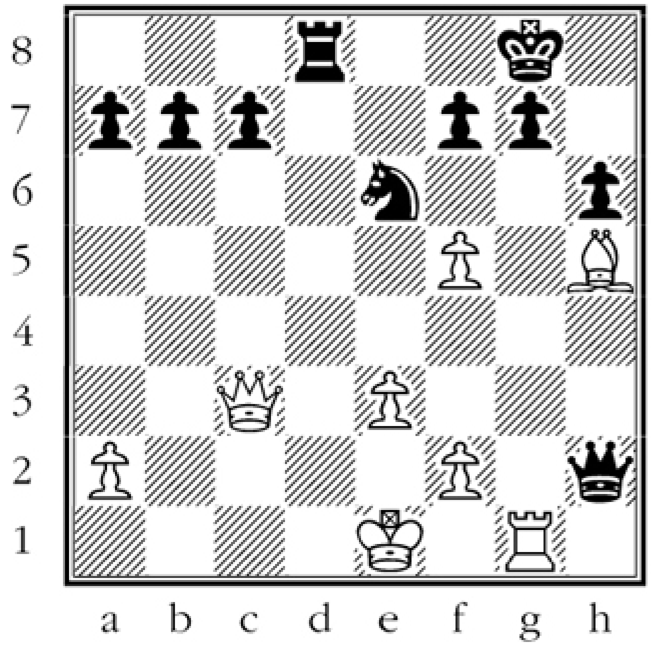
Has Black blundered?

21…Qd6!

A powerful thrust which sends White reeling. If 22.fxe6?? Qxd1#.

22.Bh5 Qxh2

Now Black attacks two pieces, which reduces White to desperation. (D)



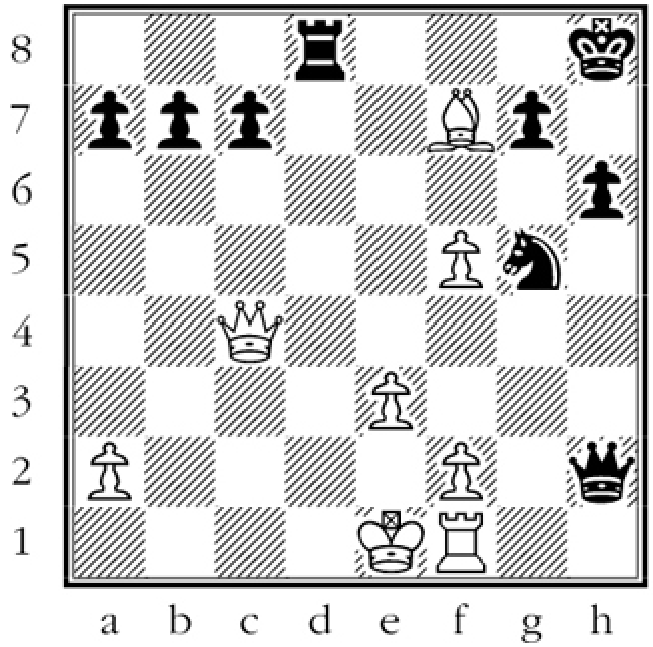
5

Black is well prepared for White’s active counterplay.

23.Bxf7+ Kh8!

Of course Black does not play 23…Kxf7, allowing White to capture the knight with CHECK.

24.Rf1 Ng5! 25.Qc4 (D)



6

Or 25.Bc4 Nf3+ 26.Ke2 Qh5! and Black’s threat of …Ng1+ is crushing.

How does Black exploit the disorganized state of White’s pieces?

25…Qd6! White resigns.

The threat is 26…Qd1# or 26.Qd2#. To parry this threat he must move his queen, allowing Black to win the bishop.

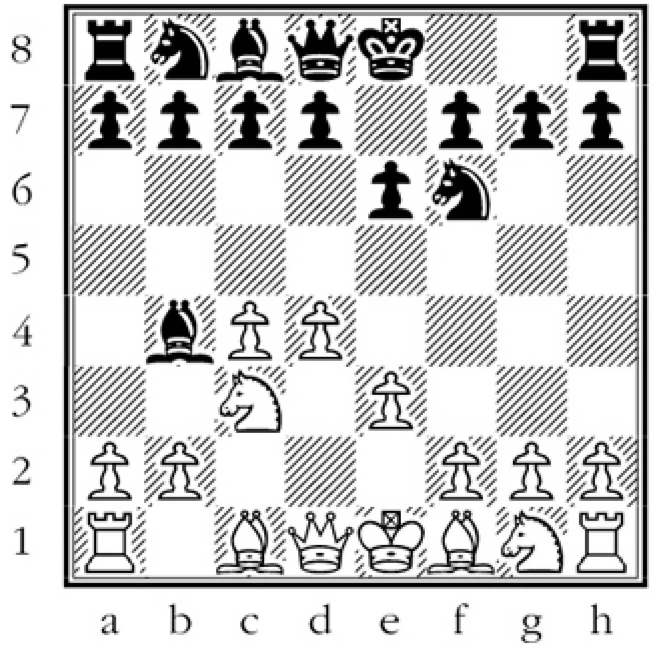
Black played very ably to neutralize his initial inferiority in development. White moved his queen too much in the opening. Black cleverly exploited this mistaken policy by organizing a rapid-file attack against the white king stranded in the center.

Weaknesses in the Castled Position

Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 (D)



7

Black intends to play an aggressive game.

Black’s third move tells us that he means to develop his pieces actively. White’s last move, on the other hand, points to a slow or noncommittal development on his part.

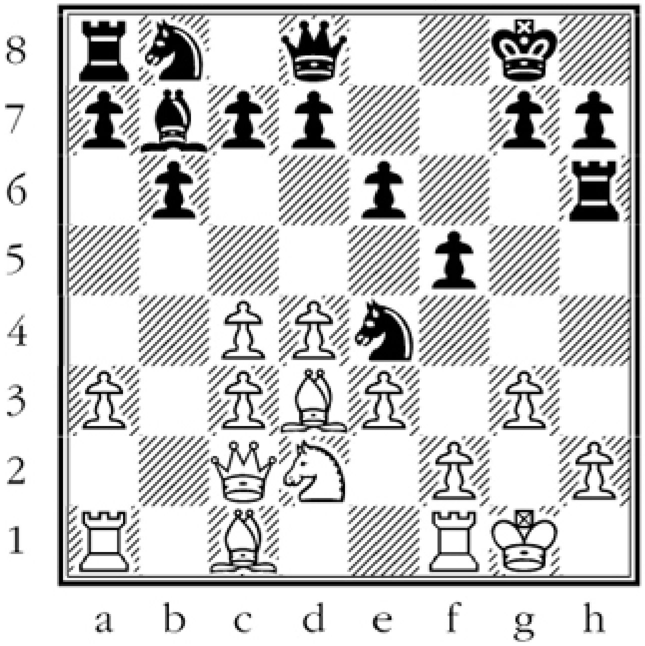
4…b6 5.Nf3 Bb7 6.Qc2 Ne4 7.Bd3

Somewhat belatedly White realizes that Black has a good development and as a result he tries to fight for control of the vital e4-square. But Black has entrenched himself too well.

7…f5! 8.a3 Bxc3+ 9.bxc3 0-0 10.0-0 Rf6! 11.Nd2 Rh6! 12.g3??

Black has set a little trap which White has avoided. The trap was: 12.Bxe4 fxe4 13.Nxe4 Qh4, attacking the knight a second time and threatening mate.

By playing 12.g3?? White has avoided the trap; but he has opened up the long diagonal for Black's light-square bishop. Black recognizes the possibilities and takes advantage of White's weakened kingside with a final, smashing attack. (D)



8

Black can now demolish White's kingside.

12…Qh4!!

First point: if 13.gxh4 Rg6+ 14.Kh1 Nxf2#!. Throughout the proceedings Black's sinister bishop at b7 plays an effective role at long distance.

13.Nf3 Ng5!!! 14.gxh4

A delightful possibility prepared by Black is 14.Nxh4 Nh3#.

14…Nxf3+

Black is fully prepared for 15.Kh1, to which his answer will be 15…Rxh4 16.Kg2 (else …Rxh2#) 16…Ne1++! 17.Kg3 Rg4+ 18.Kh3 Bg2#.

15.Kg2 Ne1++ 16.Kg3 Rg6+ 17.Kf4 Rg4+ 18.Ke5 Nf3#

Another way was 18…Nc6#.

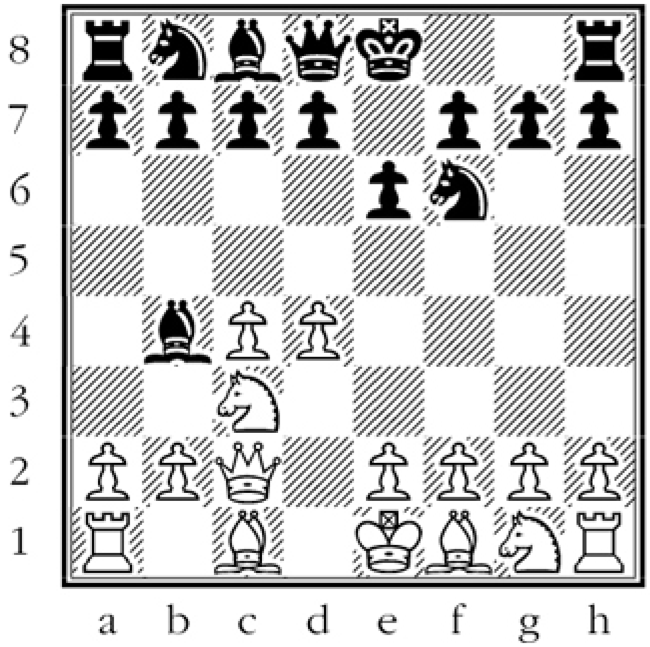
Black took superb advantage of White's weakening of the castled position. Despite the general opinion that Black's play must necessarily be defensive, there are frequent opportunities for aggressive play on his part.

In the following game, for example, Black realizes that White goes badly astray when he castles on the queenside in the face of an open c-file. When White aggravates his foolhardiness by presenting a target, in the form of an advanced a-pawn, Black is alert to his opportunities. He soon unleashes an attack that rakes White's castled position.

Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 (D)



9

Black must fight back in the center.

Black has a serious problem here. White threatens e2-e4 with an overwhelming position in the center.

4…c5

With this wing thrust at the center, Black restrains his opponent from monopolizing the center.

5.Nf3 Nc6 6.dxc5 Bxc5 7.Bg5 Be7 8.0-0-0?

Gaining time for placing a rook on the d-file to press down on Black's backward d-pawn.

Yet Black realizes that he gains more than White does by this move; any strategical advantage that White may have is canceled out by Black's attacking chances against the exposed white king.

8…Qa5! 9.a3?

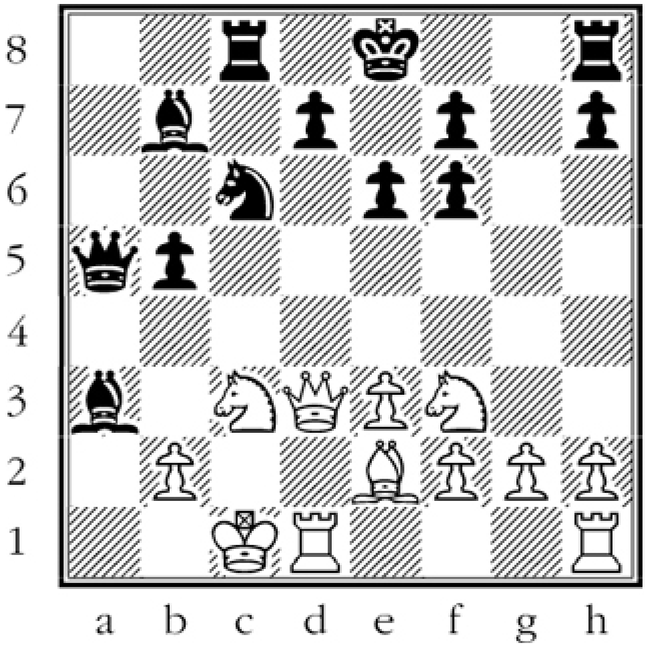
Now Black has a new target to aim at.

9…a6 10.e3 b6 11.Be2 Bb7 12.Nb1 b5!

Black is well aware that open lines against White's king are all-important in this game.

13.cxb5 axb5 14.Qd3 Rc8! 15.Nc3 Bxa3!! 16.Bxf6 gxf6

Now that Black has scored a bull's-eye on the target, he does not fear White's counterattack. (D)



10

Black's pieces are admirably posted for attack.

Black sees that after 17.Qxd7+ Kf8 18.Qxb7?? he has a mate in two: 18…Qxc3+ etc. As we'll see in a moment, Black has more sparkling attacking ideas in mind. If 17.bxa3 Qxa3+ 18.Kb1 Nb4 wins.*

17.Kb1 Bxb2!!

Proving that the white king's flight from the "hot" c-file did him no good.

18.Na2

Black has worked out this pretty variation after 18.Kxb2: 18…Qb4+ 19.Kc2 Ne5! 20.Nxe5 Be4!! winning the queen by a double pin.

18…Ne5! 19.Nxe5 Bd5!

White resigns, as he has no good parry to the threat of …Qxa2#.

With this dashing game we take our leave of attacks against the castled king and turn to attacks on strategical weaknesses – a very important subject.

Strategical Weaknesses

In the following game Black plays steadily, waiting for a “break.” Then, realizing that White has made a serious error, Black repulses the attack with cool judgment and calm, accurate appraisal of the situation.

French Defense (in effect)

White – Black

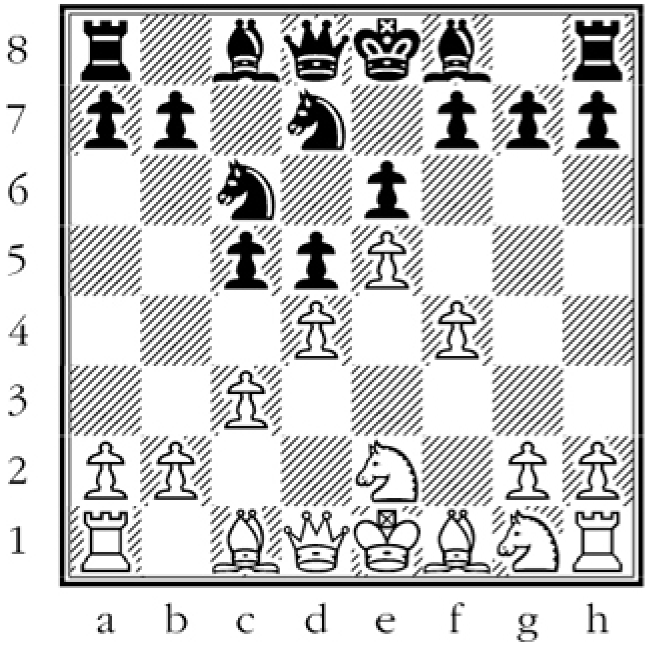
1.e4 Nf6 2.Nc3

As indicated in *Third Book of Chess* (pages 74-107) White’s best chance of obtaining an advantage lies in the forthright 2.e5 etc.

2…d5 3.e5 Nfd7 4.d4 e6 5.Nce2 c5 6.c3

After White’s timid second move the game has turned into a French Defense in which Black stands rather well. Note that Black has some initiative in the center, for his last move has put White’s pawn under pressure.

6…Nc6 7.f4 (D)



11

Black is developing more rapidly than White!

Black can now put more pressure on White’s center with …Qb6. But he prefers to continue his development in straightforward fashion.

In fact, Black never moves his queen throughout this game!

7…Be7 8.Nf3 0-0 9.g3 cxd4 10.cxd4 Nb6! 11.Bh3? Bd7! 12.0-0 Rc8!

The harmonious development of Black's forces is a thing of beauty. His tenth move made room for his 11th; his 11th for his 12th.

And the object of these moves? Black wants to post his pieces powerfully on the queenside, with such moves as …Nc4. He sees that White's 11th move has sadly weakened his control of the c4-square.

The play will unfold along these lines: Black brings the bulk of his forces to the queenside to increase his pressure there. White seeks a counterattack by pressing forward on the kingside.

Who will succeed? Black's plans have a sound basis, while White's "attack" is a delusion.

13.g4 f6! 14.exf6 Bxf6 15.g5 Be7 16.Kh1 Nc4 17.Nc3 Bb4! 18.Qe2 Re8

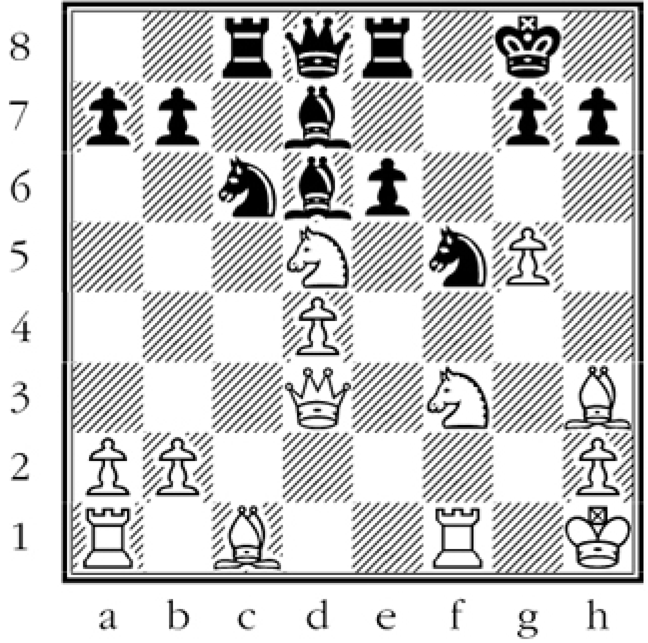
Since the last note Black has made further progress. He has improved the position of his pieces, and White has forfeited command of another important light square by playing 15.g5.

19.Qd3 Nd6!

Directed against White's next move, and also played with a view to …Na5 followed by …Bxc3 and …Bb5.

20.f5 Nxf5 21.Nxd5 Bd6!

Now Black has distinctly the upper hand, for example: 22.Nf4 Nb4! 23.Qd1 Nc2 24.Rb1 Nce3, winning the exchange, or 23.Qe2 Rxc1! 24.Raxc1 Bxf4 with the winning advantage of two pieces for a rook.


12

(D)

Black is building up a powerful counterattack.

To avoid the variations just pointed out, White chooses a different way. But it is all one to Black, who continues with remorseless vigor.

22.Bxf5 exf5 23.Nf4 Re4! 24.Qb3+ Kh8 25.Nh4 Nxd4 26.Qh3 Rc7! 27.g6 Bc6!

Presumably White is doing the attacking – but see with what power Black’s pieces press down on the kingside! White makes a pathetic gesture toward a mating attack, but Black repulses the attempt with brutal counterstrokes.

28.Nf3 h6 29.Ne6 Nxe6 30.Bxh6 Rh4! White resigns.

White is of course unable to capture the imprudent rook, and his position is about to topple. Black has shown his contempt for the ill judged “attack” by not even bothering to move his queen. It would be difficult to find a more convincing example of the proposition that the attack does not always pay.

In the next game, too, White saddles himself with a positional weakness. Apparently he has compensation in the form of a more aggressive position; and yet Black single-mindedly concentrates on taking advantage of White’s real weakness.

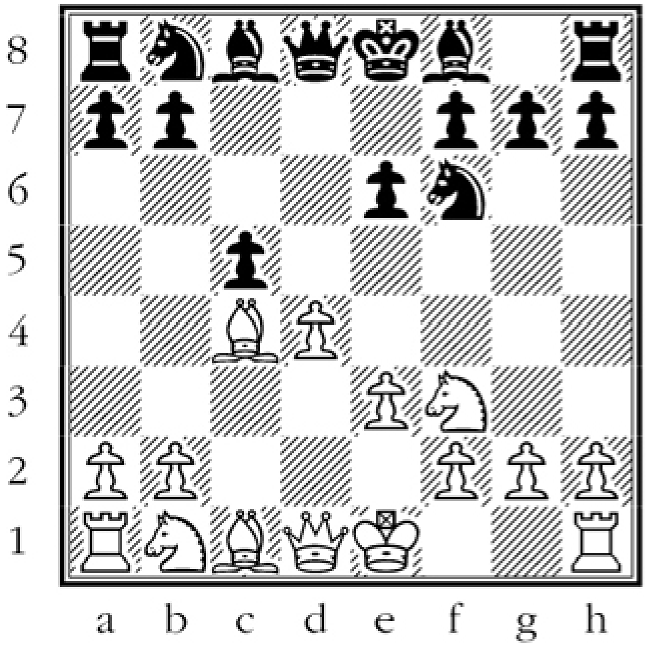
Queen’s Gambit Accepted

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3

Black’s acceptance of the gambit on the second move has temporarily cost him control of the center. It is therefore important for him to strike at the center with …c5.

4…e6 5.Bxc4 c5 (D)



13

Black’s last move fights for control of the center.

Black looks forward to having a comfortable position. He will play …a6 and …b5, developing his light-square bishop very favorably at the b7-square.

6.Nc3 a6 7.0-0 b5 8.Bd3 cxd4! 9.exd4

This exchange of pawns has opened a good diagonal for White’s dark-square bishop. Yet Black very well knows what he is about, for he has created an isolated d-pawn in White’s camp. (An “isolated” pawn is one which lacks protection from pawns of the same color on adjacent files. In this particular case, White’s c-pawn and e-pawn have disappeared.) An isolated pawn is always a potential weakness, for it may require defending by valuable pieces. This, then, is why Black isolated the pawn.

But Black has another reason for the pawn exchange. When a pawn is isolated, there are no pawns left to control the square immediately in front of the pawn. This square becomes a “strong point” for the enemy pieces, for they can never be dislodged by pawns. In this case, the d5-square is a strong point for Black.

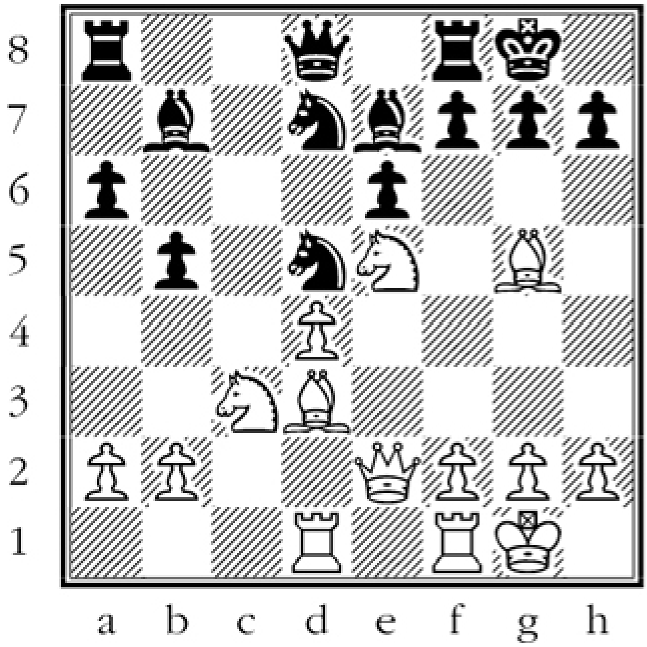
9…Bb7 10.Bg5 Be7 11.Qe2 0-0 12.Rad1

Black will now bring his queen knight into play, and will then be ready to occupy the strong point at d5.

12…Nbd7 13.Ne5 Nd5!

Foreseeing that White will seek the opening of more attacking lines with f2-f4-f5, Black plays for simplifying exchanges.

There are two reasons for such exchanges. One is that the fewer pieces there are on the board, the harder it will be for White to complicate the play. The other point is that the fewer pieces on the board, the easier it will be for Black to menace the white pawn weakness. (D)



14

Black has occupied the strong point on the d5-square.

14.Bc1

A strange-looking move that enables Black to maintain a clear positional advantage. But this would also be true after 14.Bxe7 Qxe7 15.Nxd5 Bxd5. (Remember that simplifying is detrimental to the player with the isolated pawn.) **14…Nxc3! 15.bxc3 Nf6**

Black’s exchange of knights is hard to understand. For now White has acquired a new c-pawn all over again and his d-pawn is no longer isolated.

The explanation is that White’s c-pawn *is backward on an open file*. It is subject to attack by black pieces and can be defended only by pieces, not pawns.

16.a4?! Qd5!

Threatening mate on the move.

If White parries the mate threat by 17.f4 or 17.f3, Black has a powerful reply in 17…b4!, again isolating the d-pawn and in some cases winning a pawn.

17.Nf3 Rfc8!

Hitting at the weak pawn – so that if 18.axb5 axb5 19.Bxb5 Rxc3. In that case Black again remains with pressure against the isolated pawn, and the position of his forces is more aggressive.

White tries for something better, and ends up with something worse.

18.Bb2

Black has reason to be gratified at this wretched position of the enemy bishop for purely defensive reasons.

18…Ne4!

White defends, Black attacks.

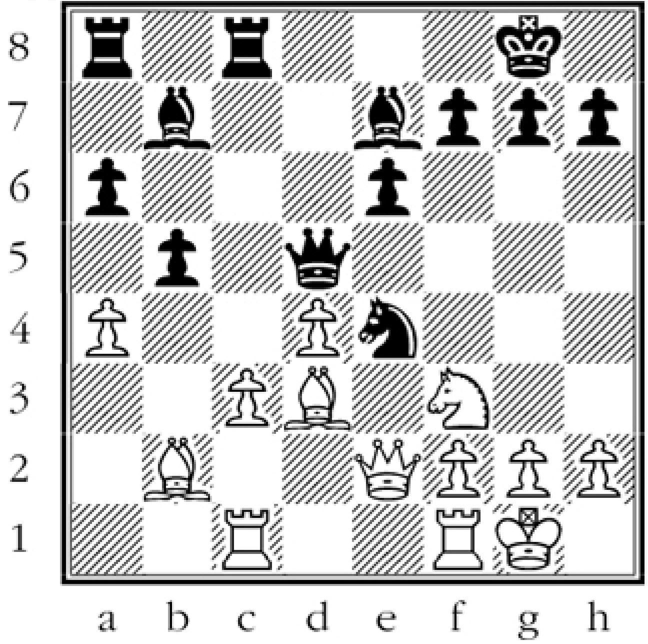
If now 19.Bxe4 Qxe4 20.Qxe4 Bxe4 and Black’s bishops have enormous scope while White’s positional weakness persists.

Furthermore, Black is well satisfied with the possibilities in 19.axb5 axb5 20.Bxb5 Nxc3 21.Bxc3 Rxc3 for then he again has the two-bishop advantage plus pressure on White’s isolated pawn.

Even more desirable for Black is 20.Bxe4 Qxe4 21.Qxb5 Ba6 winning the exchange.

19.Rc1

As we have seen from the previous note, Black has forced his opponent to make another unattractive defensive move. (D)



15

Black now establishes a winning advantage.

19…Ng5!

This knight cannot be captured because of Black's mate threat along the diagonal. And 20.Ne1 Nh3+ 21.Kh1 Nf4 leaves Black with a positionally won game.

20.axb5 axb5 21.Bxb5 Nxf3+ 22.gxf3 Qg5+! White resigns.

For after 23.Kh1, Black has 23…Qg4! when White will have to give up his queen to stop mate.

Black did a very effective job in stamping White's pawns as weaknesses and in refuting White's attempts to obtain an attacking position.

In the first three games of this chapter we saw how Black lashed out at weaknesses in the white king's position; in the last two games Black succeeded by hammering away at White's positional weaknesses.

But suppose White has no weakness? How do you proceed? The next chapter deals with this problem.

Chapter Two

How to Seize the Initiative

If you accept the view that White has some initiative by reason of his first move, you will doubtless agree that in actual practice White often loses the initiative with great rapidity.

And, furthermore, if you realize just what is happening, you will be in a position to snatch up White’s lost initiative and become the aggressor.

Now, assuming that White does not lose material and does not create weaknesses, just what should Black look for in order to seize the initiative?

There are several ways White can go wrong. He may, for example, play an opening so poor that his theoretical advantage disappears at once. This gives Black his chance.

Or White may play an excellent opening and then ruin his development by a series of foolish, time-wasting queen moves. Here again Black must be alert to the possibilities.

If Black discovers that White is wasting valuable time chasing a relatively unimportant pawn, he can use the opportunity to get far ahead in development.

Sometimes White may avoid the sin of greed only to succumb to another fault – bad judgment. Sheer thoughtlessness, inattention, negligence, or happy-go-lucky innocence of a positional trap may ruin White’s development. In every case Black should be alert to seize the initiative.

So you see there are many ways for White to go wrong, and it pays Black to keep a sharp lookout for such cases of poor judgment. Now let’s see some examples of the kinds of mistakes White may make.

Lost Initiative from a Poor Opening

In this game Black gives us a classic example of slashing attacking play. His play is magnificent, and yet – it all stems from White’s faulty opening. Black immediately pounces on the opportunities offered by White’s faulty play.

White – Black

Polish Opening

1.b4 e6 2.Bb2 Nf6

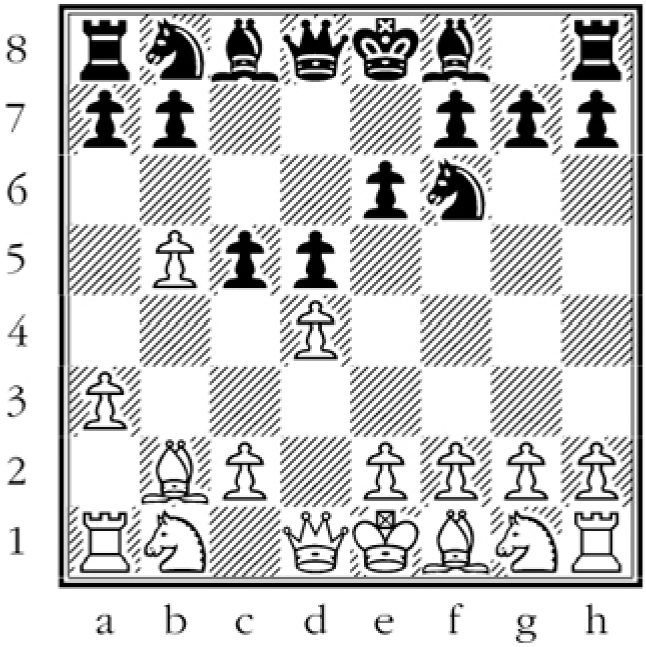
Even at this early stage we can see the faulty character of White's first move. Black is attacking, White is defending! Black's development will proceed rapidly, while White's will be laborious.

3.a3 c5 4.b5 d5

Black's pawns already have a substantial foothold on the center, while White has no pawns in the center at all. His attempt to improve the situation leads to disaster.

5.d4?

Plausible but weak, as Black promptly proves. (D)



16

Black now seizes the initiative.

5…Qa5+!

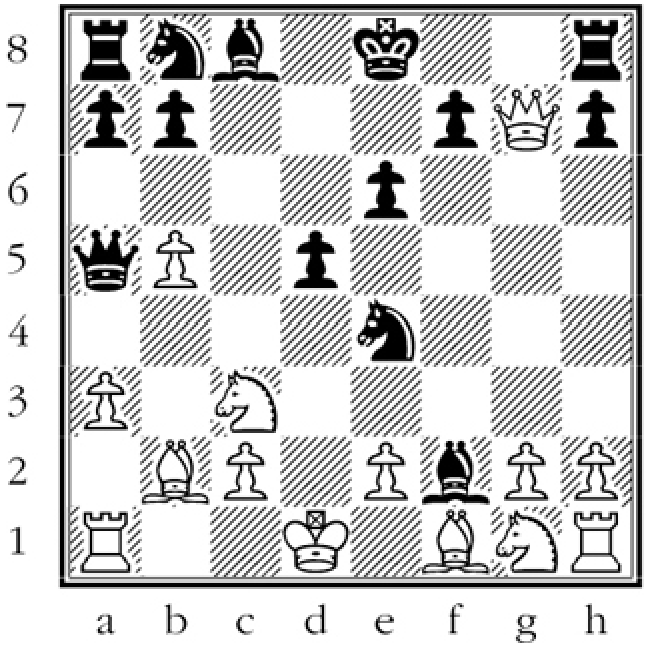
This forceful move starts a chain reaction. It forces White to play Nc3 in order to protect his unfortunate b-pawn. Then, to protect this knight, White is forced to develop his queen in a risky manner. These factors give Black his chance for a brilliant attack.

6.Nc3 Ne4 7.Qd3 cxd4 8.Qxd4 Bc5! 9.Qxg7 Bxf2+

Black's brisk attacking play has shunted White's queen far from the scene of action and has deprived White's king of the castling privilege.

Even at this early stage White’s position is shattered.

10.Kd1 (D)



17

How does Black guard his menaced rook?

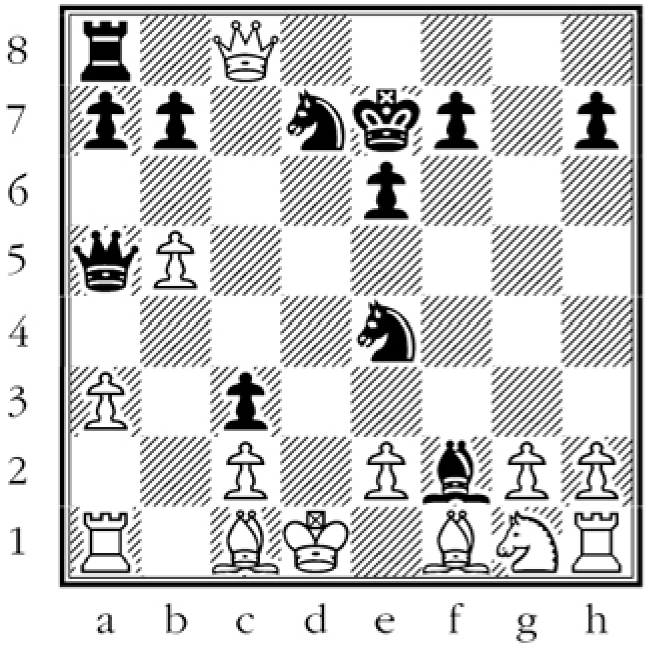
10…d4!!

Black ignores the attack on his rook because he has decided on an all-out attack on the white king. Note, by the way, that 11.Nxe4?? allows 11…Qe1#.

11.Qxh8+ Ke7! 12.Qxc8 dxc3

In the event of 13.Bxc3 Black intends 13…Nxc3+ 14.Kd2 Ne4+ 15.Kd3 Qd2+ 16.Kxe4 Qe3#.

13.Bc1 Nd7!! (D)



18

Black offers another rook!

Black has calculated the play very closely. Thus, if now 14.Qc4 Rd8 15.Qb4+ Ndc5+ 16.Bd2 Rxd2+ 17.Kc1 Rd1+!! 18.Kxd1 Qd8+ followed by mate.

What now follows is a foregone conclusion, despite White’s enormous material advantage. With four powerful attacking pieces at his disposal, Black engineers a sparkling mating attack.

14.Qxa8 Qxb5 15.Bf4 Qd5+ 16.Kc1 Be3+!! 17.Bxe3 Nf2!!

White resigns, for after 18.Bxf2 Black replies 18…Qd2+ forcing mate in two more moves.

Black has forcefully punished White for losing the initiative by choosing an inferior opening line.

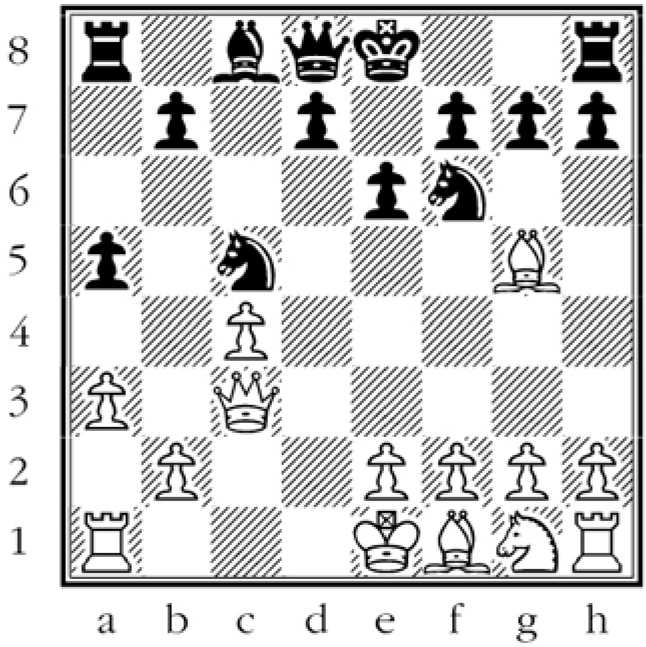
Lost Initiative from Too Many Queen Moves

In the next game White starts out with an excellent opening; but then, animated by some perverse suicidal impulse, he lets his queen drift out of play. Black develops rapidly and forcefully, sacrifices a rook and wins handsomely.

Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 c5 5.dxc5 Na6 6.a3 Bxc3+ 7.Qxc3 Nxc5 8.Bg5 a5 (D)



19

A typical situation in the Nimzo-Indian Defense.

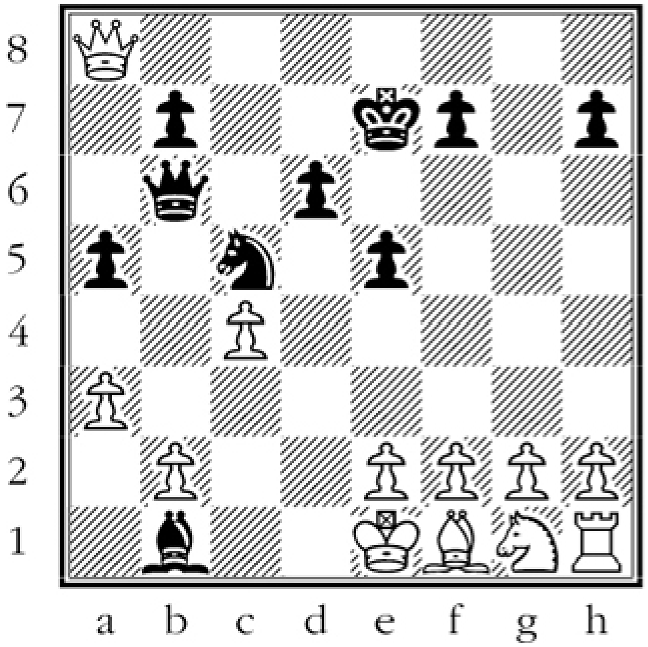
This position is typical of the opening because Black has developed rapidly but has to give up one of his bishops in the process.

White should now play 9.f3 a4 10.e4 d6 leading to a position with chances for both sides. Instead, his weak play enables Black to seize the initiative.

9.Qe5? d6 10.Bxf6 gxf6 11.Qf4? e5 12.Qh6 Qb6!

Black has gained two moves for developing his bishop and has also brought his queen into active play. White belatedly returns to rational moves, but as Black demonstrates, it is already too late for that.

13.Rb1 Bf5!! 14.Qxf6 Bxb1 15.Qxh8+ Ke7 16.Qxa8 (D)



20

Black has a mating attack.

This is the position Black has played for: White’s queen is far afield, and his other pieces are still on their home squares.

16…Ne4!

Threatens mate in two.

17.e3 Qxb2

Threatening mate on the move.

18.Qxa5 Qxf2+

White resigns, for if 19.Kd1 Qxf1+ 20.Qe1 Qd3+ and mate next move. Black has played with superb energy to exploit White’s nerveless loss of the initiative.

Lost Initiative from Greedy Play

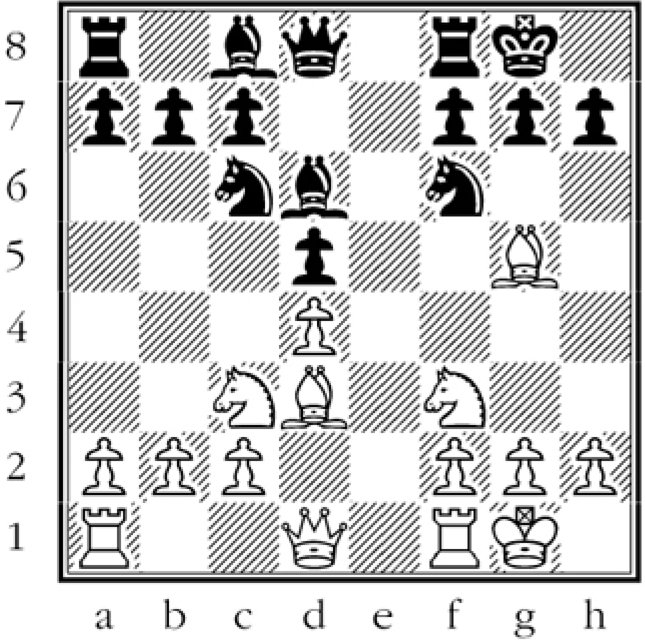
In the next game, also, White plays the opening not too badly but Black maneuvers ingeniously to obtain the advantage when White becomes greedy.

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Bd3 Bd6 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nc3 Nc6 8.Bg5

White has already forfeited part of his initiative by playing 3.exd5 and thereby opening the diagonal of Black's imprisoned light-square bishop. Nevertheless, Black is still under some pressure, mainly because his king knight is pinned and his d-pawn is under attack. (D)



21

How is Black to defend his d-pawn?

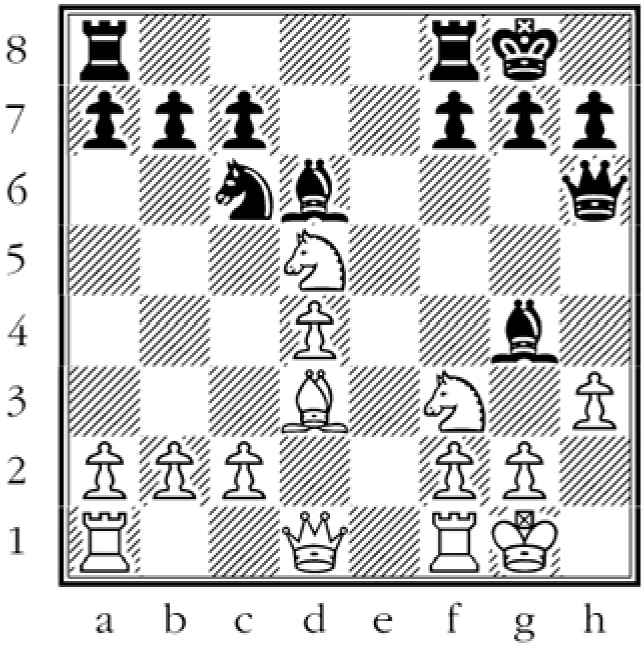
Black's daring conclusion is that he need not defend his d-pawn altogether! In the *Third Book of Chess* (page 74) Black played the timid 8…Ne7? 9.Bxf6 gxf6 10.Nh4! and was roundly trounced a few moves later. Therefore he plays: **8…Bg4!**

The first point of Black's play is that if 9.Nxd5 Bxh2+ 10.Kxh2 Qxd5 and he has recovered the pawn with a good game.

9.Bxf6 Qxf6! 10.Nxd5 Qh6!

Now Black threatens …Bxf6 and …Qxh2#.

Nor can White defend with 11.g3?, for then 11…Qh5! wins. True, White can play 11.Qc1, but after 11…Qxc1 12.Raxc1 Bxf3 13.gxf3 Nxd4 Black has regained his pawn and has a very promising endgame. White therefore selects what seems to be the least evil: **11.h3** (D)



22

Black has seized the initiative.

11…Nxd4!

Black offers a piece that cannot be accepted, for if 12.hxg4??? Nxf3+ 13.Qxf3 Qh2#.

12.Be2 Nxf3+ 13.Bxf3 Bxh3!

Black, who gave up a pawn a few moves ago, is now actually a pawn ahead. White cannot play 14.gxh3 because of 14…Qxh3 15.Re1 Bh2+ 16.Kh1 Bg3+ 17.Kg1 Qh2+ and mate next move.

14.Re1 Be6 15.g3 Rad8 16.Qe2 Bxd5 17.Bxd5 Bxg3!

A neat thrust. If 18.fxg3 Rxd5 with a second pawn to the good.

18.Be4 Rd2 19.Qxd2 Bh2+!

White resigns, for if 20.Kg2 Qxd2 21.Kxh2 Qxf2+ with a tremendous advantage in material for Black.

It was fascinating to see how cleverly Black snatched the initiative and the attack in this bright little game.

Lost Initiative from Blocked Development

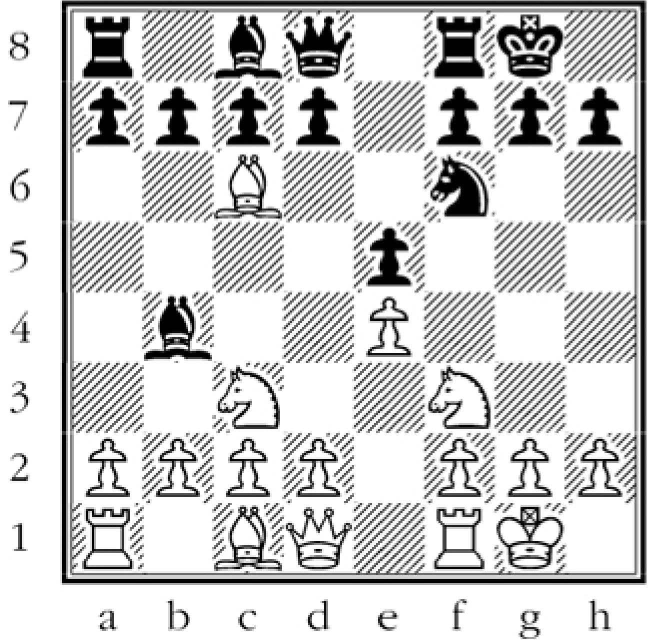
In the next game all is tranquil throughout, but the game is if anything even more instructive.

Four Knights' Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bb4 5.0-0 0-0 6.Bxc6

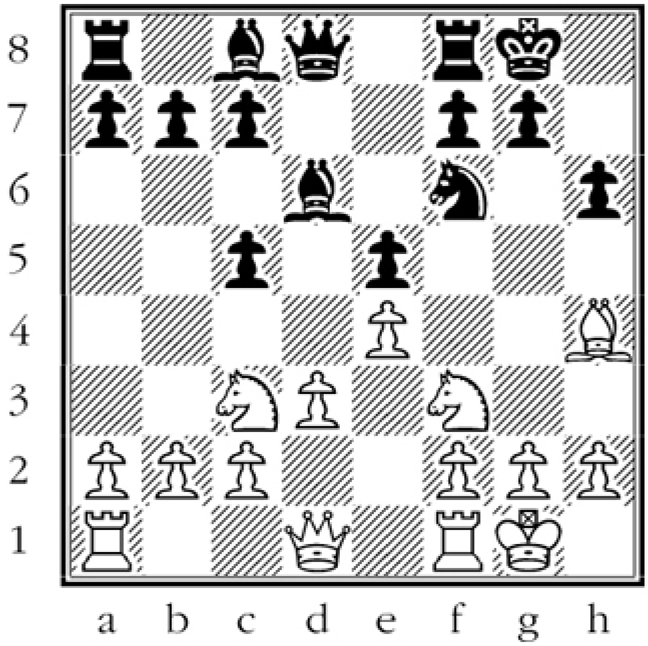
In a game in the *Third Book of Chess* (page 74) Black played 6…bxc6?. This led to lasting difficulties for him because of the light-square bishop's inability to develop. Here Black recaptures with his d-pawn, making it possible for the bishop to develop effectively. (D)



23

How should Black retake?

6…dxc6! 7.d3 Bd6 8.Bg5 h6 9.Bh4 c5! (D)



24

Black has set a subtle trap.

Black's last move not only prevents d2-d4, it also sets a trap into which White falls headlong.

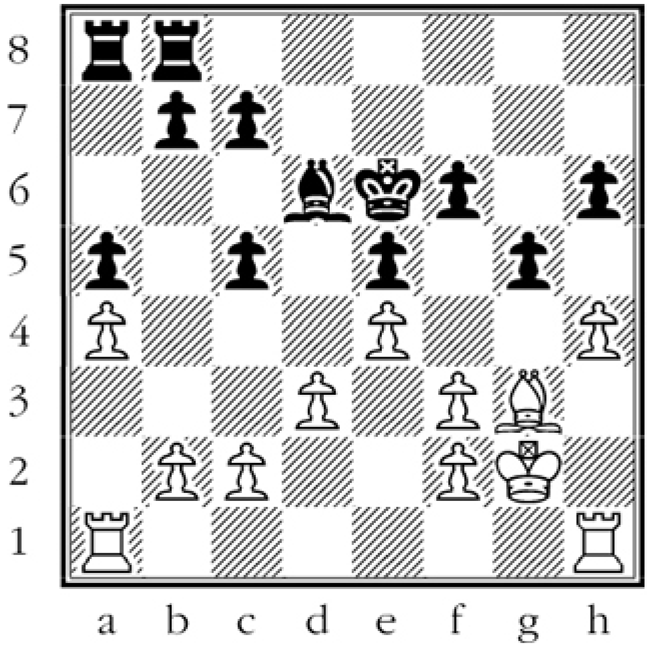
10.Nd5? g5! 11.Nxf6+

Likewise after 11.Bg3 Nxd5 12.exd5 Bg4 Black has all the play.

11…Qxf6 12.Bg3 Bg4! 13.h3 Bxf3 14.Qxf3 Qxf3 15.gxf3 f6 16.Kg2

The result of Black's positional trap is that he is in effect a piece to the good. White's bishop is a dead piece, and can play no effective role in the game.

16…a5 17.a4 Kf7 18.Rh1 Ke6 19.h4 Rfb8 (D)



25

Black is a piece ahead!

Black's strategy is delightfully simple. He plays to open a file on the queenside, by advancing …b5 and …c4. Then his "extra" piece is bound to win for him.

20.hxg5 hxg5 21.b3 c6 22.Ra2 b5 23.Rha1 c4 24.axb5

If now 24.bxc4 Black wins easily after 24…bxc4 25.dxc4 Rb4 etc.

24…cxb3 25.cxb3 Rxb5 26.Ra4 Rxb3 27.d4 Rb5 28.Rc4 Rb4 29.Rxc6 Rxd4

White resigns, as he is powerless against Black's "extra" piece. There is a great deal to be learned from the way Black seized the initiative by taking advantage of White’s careless tenth move.

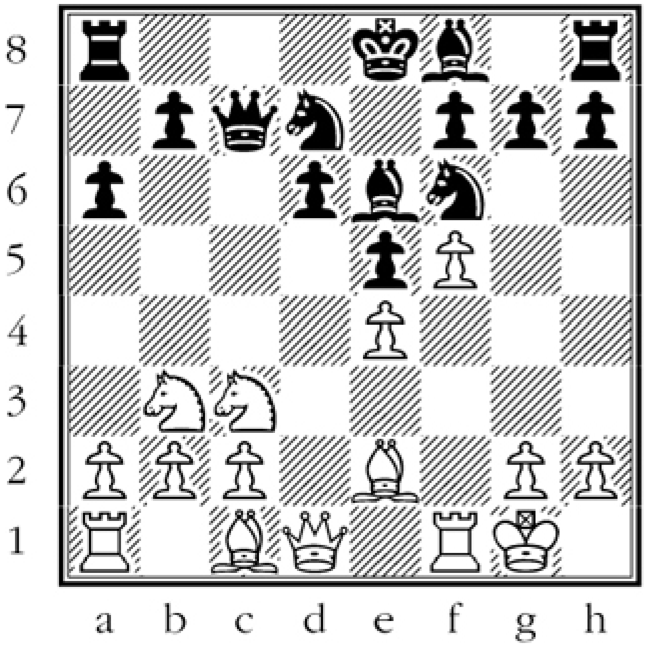
Lost Initiative by an Error of Judgment

In the following game Black sees his opportunity to seize the initiative when White condemns his light-square bishop to lasting inactivity. Then Black continues to exercise cumulative pressure on White’s weakened position.

Sicilian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be2 e5 7.Nb3 Be6 8.0-0 Nbd7 9.f4 Qc7 10.f5? (D)



26

Black can now take the initiative.

With pawns on the light squares e4 and f5, White has reduced the mobility of his light-square bishop to an alarming extent. If this piece is not “dead,” it is certainly “half-dead.” Another drawback to White’s last move is that it releases pressure on the center, thereby enabling Black to react eventually with …d5!.

10…Bc4 11.Bd3 b5! 12.Be3 Be7 13.Qe2 Rc8 14.Rac1 0-0 15.Nd2 d5!

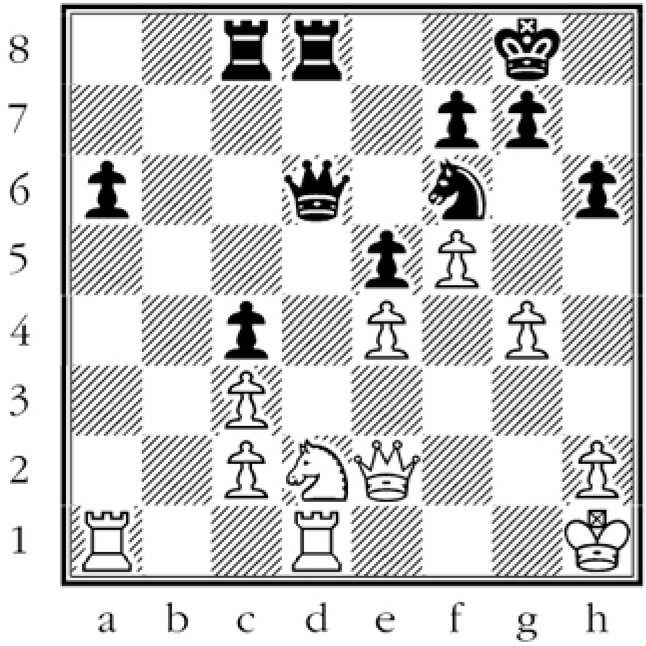
Declaration of independence. As in the previous game, White’s colorless opening has been the first step in Black’s seizure of the initiative.

True, Black permits White to get rid of the useless bishop and cancel Black’s pressure on the half-open c-file. But Black exacts a heavy price: the opening of the d-file for Black’s forces.

16.Bxc4 dxc4 17.a3 b4! 18.axb4 Bxb4 19.g4

A gesture toward attack on the kingside. But Black is well prepared for it. The permanent result is a weakness that Black will exploit later on.

19…Bxc3 20.bxc3 Qc6! 21.Qg2 Nc5! 22.Bxc5 Qxc5+ 23.Kh1 Rfd8 24.Qe2 h6 25.Ra1 Qd6 26.Rfd1 (D)



27

Black is ready for the final blow.

26…Qc6!

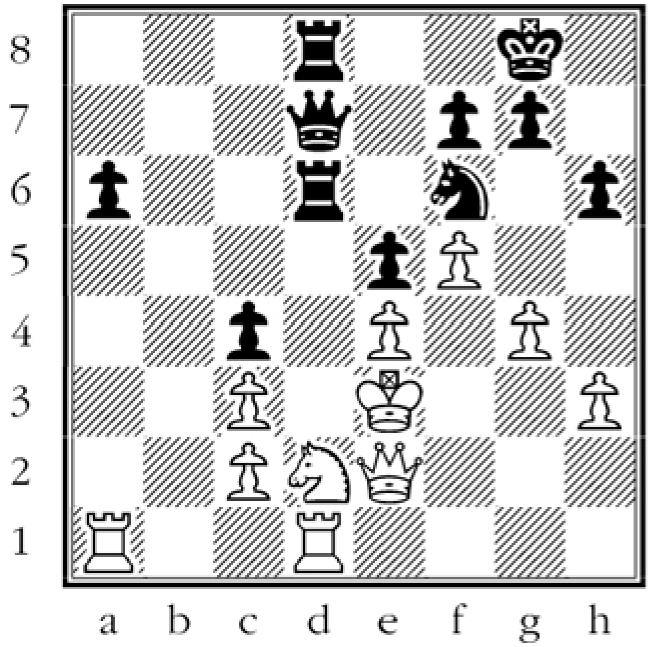
Black threatens 27…Rxd2! 28.Rxd2 Nxe4 and wins because of a murderous discovered check.; If now 27.Rg1 Rxd2! 28.Qxd2 Nxe4 29.Qg2 Nf2#. Or if 27.Re1 Nxg4! winning a pawn.

27.Kg2 Rd6! 28.h3 Rcd8! 29.Kf3 Qd7! 30.Ke3 (D)

How does Black add the last bit of pressure that topples White’s position?

White has rushed in his king to the center to bolster his position. But Black’s mighty pin on the d-file leaves White helpless while the black knight makes a lengthy trip to b5.

30…Ne8! 31.Ra5 Nc7! 32.Rxe5 Nb5! 33.Rd5



28

Losing the exchange by 33.Rxb5 is even worse.

33…Rxd5 34.exd5 Nxc3 35.Qf3 Nxd1+ White resigns.

White has no compensation for the loss of the exchange. Having seized the initiative at an early stage, Black made admirable use of it thereafter.

Thus, in all the games in this chapter, we have seen the various ways that Black can seize the initiative in consequence of faulty play by White.

Chapter Three

How to Play Against Gambits

To know how to refute a gambit is one of the most important qualifications for playing the black pieces skillfully.

Gambits are among the most critical tests that confront you as a chessplayer.

Gambits are those openings in which Black quickly receives some material “on spec” because White hopes to bewilder or terrify him.

Some players, when they meet a gambit, put up only token resistance. Others fight back sturdily. What produces defeat in one case, and victory in another?

To succeed against a gambit, you must keep two valuable principles in mind:

(1) In a gambit, the *initiative* is much more important than material advantage. Aim cold-bloodedly and consistently for the initiative.

(2) Remember this: You can use the material advantage you have received as an excellent means of seizing the initiative. Very often the best use you can make of this material advantage is *to give back the extra material to your opponent!*

Why? Because your opponent needs a move or two to pick up the sacrificed material. If you are alert, you can make use of that time to further your development, your plans, your attack. In short, watch out for a chance to size the initiative!

Psychological Warfare

You can learn a great deal from the way Black handles this game. He produces a finish which is among the most artistic ever seen in a game of chess.

That alone is a broad hint that he seized the initiative at a fairly early stage.

But what is even more important is the mood in which he plays a gambit. “I’m not afraid of your gambit,” he seems to tell White, “and at the same time I don’t intend to put myself to a lot of trouble holding on to the pawn. In fact, you can have it back any time you please – it's a matter of indifference to me."

To force my pieces into a twisted, cramped position for the sake of holding onto a pawn-that's not for me! I want to draw the sting our of your gambit and play the game my way.

"If you want to exchange pieces, O.K. If you want to exchange queens, that's O.K. And if you want to get a bad game by sticking stubbornly to your so-called 'gambit attack,' that's surely O.K."

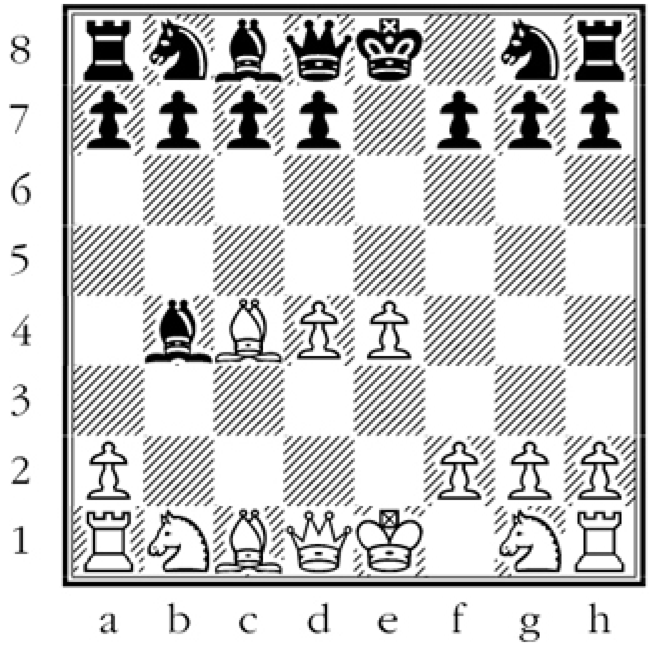
Bishop's Opening

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.c3 Bc5 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 Bb4+! (D)

Black plays to exchange pieces and ease his defensive problems.

Black has little fear from White's gambit, which aims at a powerful center and rapid development. By offering to exchange pieces Black hopes to save time.



29

Of course, White can avoid the exchange by 7.Kf1. But in that case he loses the castling privilege – surely a plus for Black.

7.Kf1?! Ba5

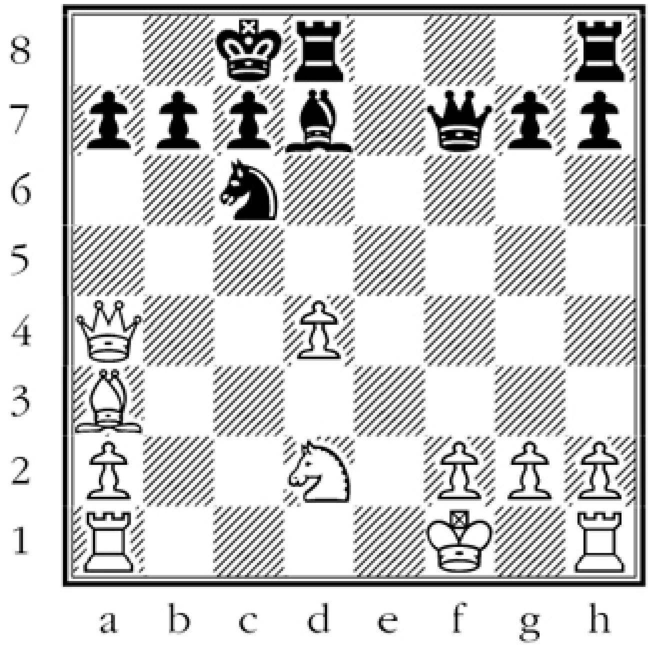
Black does not mind 8.Bxf7+ Kxf7 9.Qh5+ g6 10.Qxa5 Nc6 whereby Black gains plenty of time in exchange for the returned pawn.

8.Qh5 d5! 9.Bxd5 Qe7 10.Ba3 Nf6!

A long-foreseen resource, without which things might be critical for Black.

Black well knows that 11.Bxe7 Nxh5 12.Ba3 is now White’s best course. But Black also knows that a gambit player never contents himself with such picayune lines. The aggressor dreams of the grand attack!

11.Bxf7+? Qxf7 12.Qxa5 Nc6 13.Qa4 Nxe4 14.Nf3 Bd7 15.Nbd2 Nxd2+ 16.Nxd2 0-0-0 (D)



30

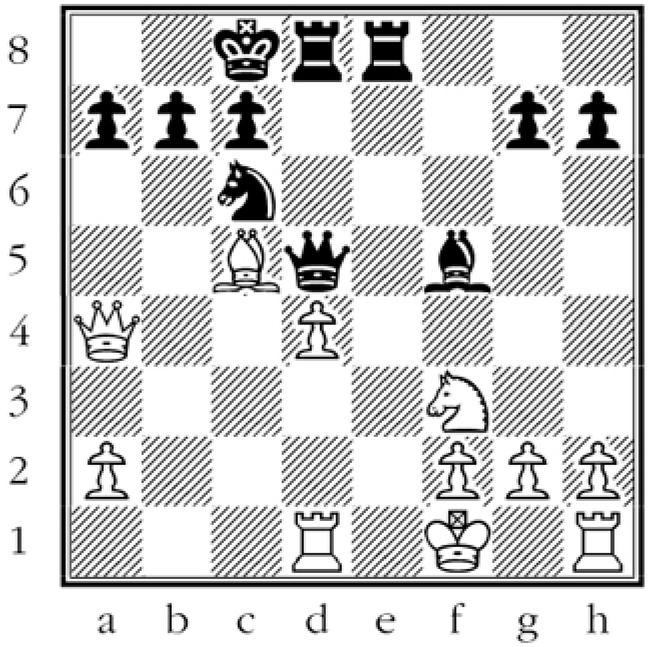
Black has a vastly superior position; he has smashed White’s flimsy gambit attack.

Black has a splendid development. His king is perfectly safe. White’s forces are disorganized and he cannot castle his king into safety.

Black’s play has been first class, psychologically as well as technically. With moves 6, 8, and 10 he has turned White’s jaunty gambit into a miserable failure. From now on, Black has it all his own way.

17.Rb1 Qd5! 18.Nf3 Bf5 19.Rd1 Rhe8! 20.Bc5

Black’s initiative is now so powerful that he can allow himself a beautiful queen sacrifice. (D)



31

Black’s queen sacrifice will leave White defenseless.

20…Qxf3!! 21.gxf3 Bh3+ 22.Kg1 Re6 23.Qc2 Rxd4!

Another winning way is 23…Ne5!.

24.Bxd4 Nxd4

White resigns because after 25.Qd3 Black mates by 25…Rg6+ etc. or by 25…Ne2+ etc.

Aggressive Counterattack

In the next game, too, the defender proclaims very quickly that he is not interested in defending. He captures the gambit pawn on move 2, returns a pawn on move 4.

Black’s paradoxical theory is that White’s gambit move 2.f4 is precisely the move that is to give Black a powerful attack. And that is the way Black executes his attack, helped by White’s greediness.

To appreciate the game to the full, you must bear in mind that Black is a very powerful player, while White is comparatively weak. Consequently, Black is not impressed by his adversary’s choice of an aggressive opening.

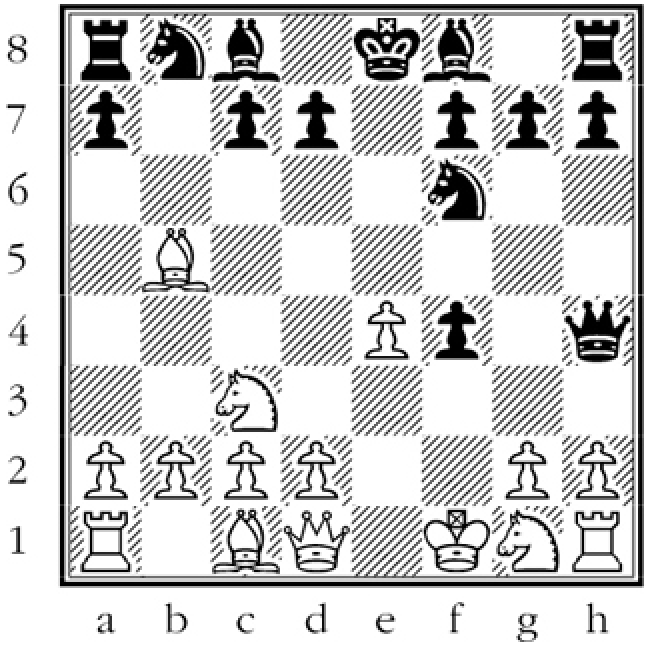
From the start, Black reveals his disrespect for his opponent. The cocky 4…b5! tells the story. It proclaims that Black is not interested in any measly gambit pawns.

The mere moves of this game do not tell the whole story. Black plays energetically, joyously, aggressively: he is out to win. He has no trouble crashing through White's mediocre defense.

Bishop's Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Bc4 Qh4+ 4.Kf1 b5!? 5.Bxb5 Nf6 6.Nc3 (D)



32

Black plays for a brisk attack against White's king, which has lost the castling privilege.

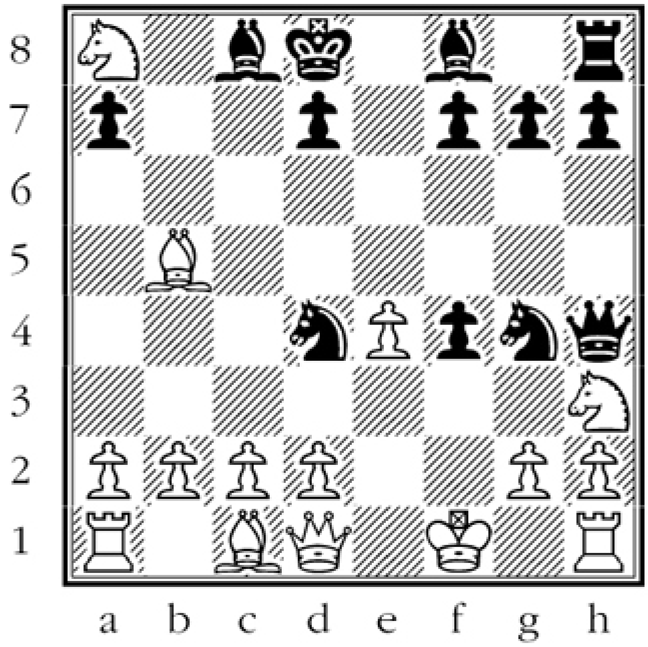
Black has already given notice that nothing less than monopolizing the attack will suit him. This has the psychological effect of scaring White out of the resourceful attitude he needs for coping with the attack.

6…Ng4 7.Nh3 Nc6 8.Nd5 Nd4! 9.Nxc7+?

Here White misses his last chance to hold the game by 9.Be2. Earlier, he had better moves in 6.Nf3, driving off Black's queen by attack, and in 7.Qe1 or 8.Qe1, disconcerting Black by offering the exchange of queens.

Black's policy has succeeded. White is so confused that he misses his last chance of a proper defense.

9…Kd8 10.Nxa8 (D)


33

Black can win material or continue the attack. White should he choose?

The simplest course for Black is 10…Nxb5 and in due course he will pick up the white knight in the corner. This would give Black a winning material advantage, and most players would choose this safe and sane course. But Black reasons differently: he wants to win quickly and elegantly; and so he does.

10…f3! 11.d3 f6

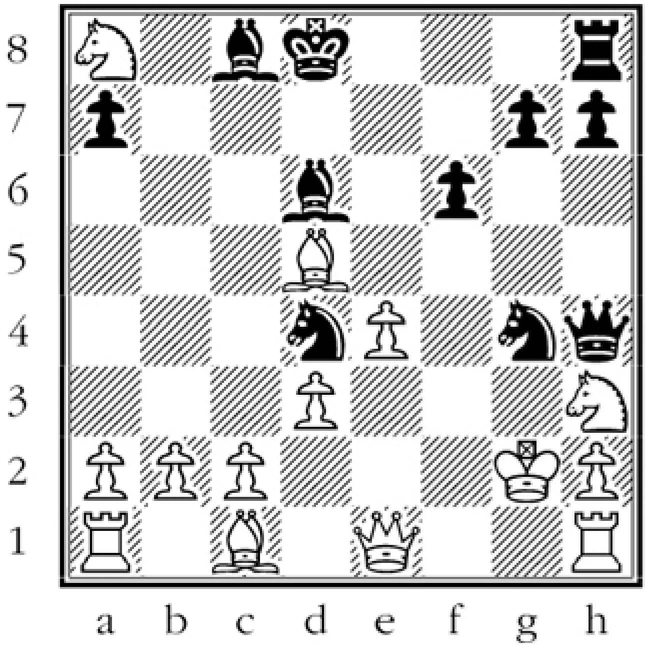
Black's play here is an object lesson for the student. His tenth move was a real battering ram, breaking up White's kingside formation no matter how White plays. Black realizes full well that White's inability to castle is an important asset for the black attack.

Now, most are apt to get overconfident in such situations. Not so Black. Though he is concentrating on a brilliant attack, he does not fail to provide against the threatened 12.Bg5+, winning his queen.

12.Bc4 d5! 13.Bxd5 Bd6!

Black is weaving a diabolical plot. With his sly 12th move he opened the diagonal for his light-square bishop. With his 13th move he got his other bishop into the attack. Can you see why Black played these moves? If not, you will find them explained in the note to Black's 16th move.

14.Qe1 fxg2+ 15.Kxg2 (D)



34

Black has set the stage for a very beautiful queen sacrifice.

15…Qxh3+!!

The move that Black has been angling for.

16.Kxh3 Ne3+

Now we see that Black's 12th move made this discovered check possible.

Note also that White's Kg3 is ruled out because of Black's 13th move.

17.Kh4 Nf3+ 18.Kh5 Bg4#

Black played with true artistry and wound up with a brilliant finish.

Here is how the game would have ended after 14.c3: 14…fxg2+ 15.Kxg2 Qxh3+!! 16.Kxh3 Ne3+ 17.Kh4. Now Black has to choose a different course from the one used in the actual game: 17…Ng2+ 18.Kh5 g6+ 19.Kh6 Bf8#!.

Parrying a Surprise Gambit

The following game is one that needs to be studied in terms of personalities. Black is a 12-year-old youngster who grew up to become world champion. His opponent is an experienced, mature player who hopes to outwit the boy by adopting a complicated gambit attack.

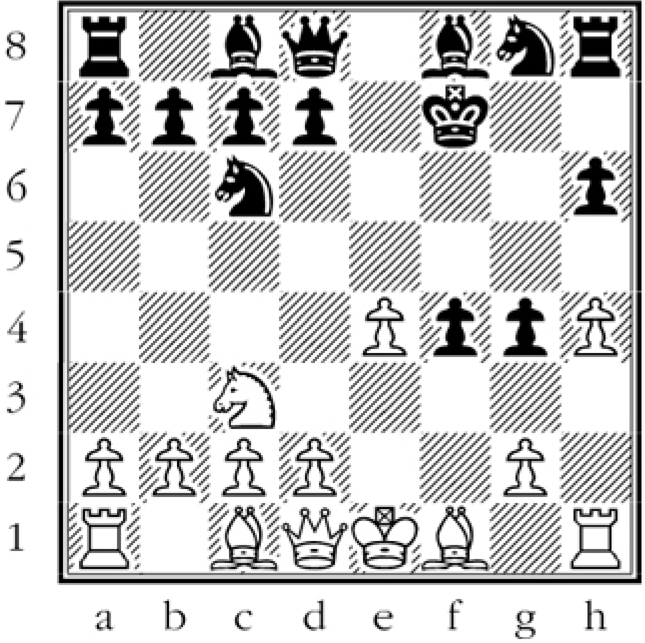
Hamppe-Allgaier Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.f4 exf4 4.Nf3 g5 5.h4 g4 6.Ng5?! h6 7.Nxf7!? Kxf7

Black's situation is one that might well trouble a sophisticated master. His king is exposed to attack and he can never castle. True, he is a piece ahead, but White can pick up some pawns in the following play, leaving him almost equal in material.

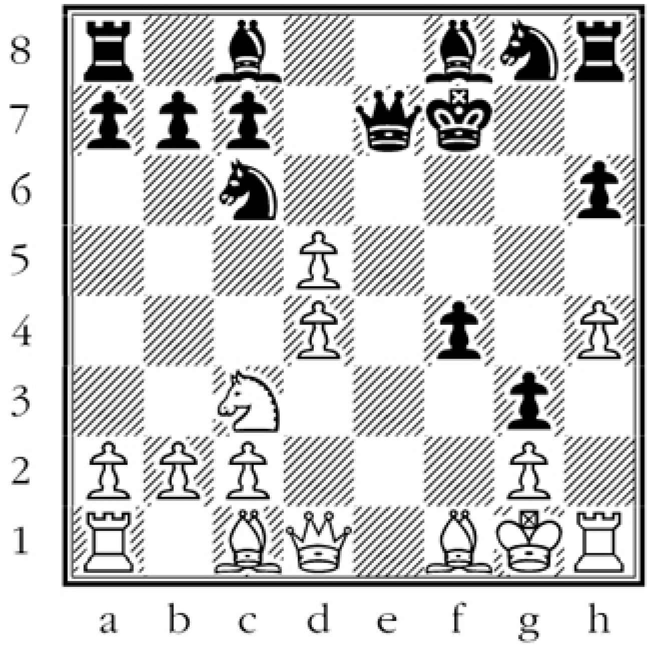
The real difficulty for Black is that he is likely to fall badly behind in development. Apparently White has done well in choosing this tricky, complicated opening. (D)



35

Black must evolve a resourceful plan.

8.d4 d5! 9.exd5 Qe7+! 10.Kf2 g3+ 11.Kg1 (D)



36

Black is about to spring a clever surprise.

A glance at Diagram 36 gives the impression that Black has virtually committed suicide. He has already lost two pawns for the sacrificed piece, and after his attacked knight moves he will lose a third and fourth pawn. Worse yet, Black will be hopelessly behind in development.

11…Nxd4!!

With this magnificent resource Black reveals that he understands very well how to free himself from an uncomfortable bind. The move is hard to see, if only because it leaves Black behind in material – though not for long.

12.Qxd4 Qc5!!

Now we see the point of Black’s sly counter-sacrifice: if 13.Qxc5?? Bxc5+ and mate next move!

13.Ne2 Qb6! 14.Qxb6 axb6

Black still threatens mate!

15.Nd4 Bc5 16.c3 Ra4

Black plays with remarkable ingenuity. He now threatens 17…Rxd4! 18.cxd4 Bxd4+ and mate follows.

If White tries 17.b4, then 17…Rxb4! smashes his defense.

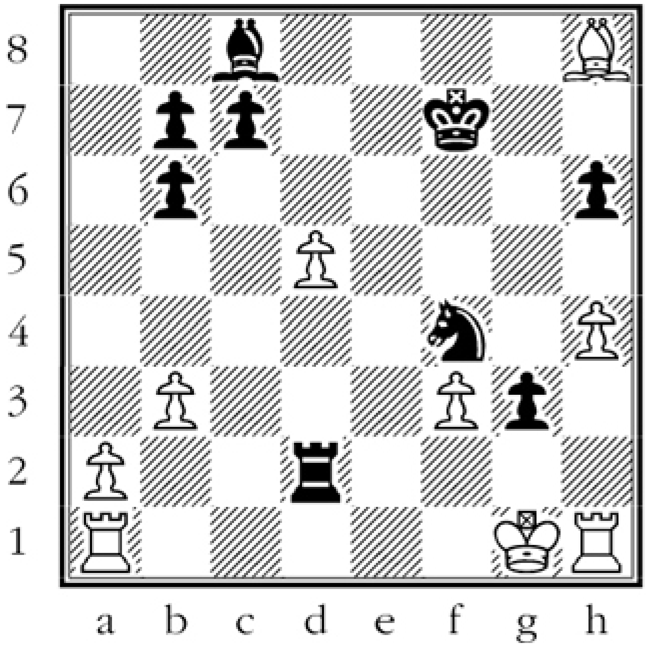
Aside from these tactical details, Black has buried White’s king rook for the rest of the game.

17.Be2 Bxd4+ 18.cxd4 Rxd4 19.b3 Nf6 20.Bb2 Rd2!

Of course not 20…Rxd5? 21.Bc4 and Black loses the exchange because of the pin.

In this situation White can avoid loss of a piece with 21.Bxf6 Kxf6 22.Bf3. But then, with a pawn down, he has no counterchances in the cut-and-dried endgame that would follow. So he tries a different way, but Black is ready for him.

21.Bh5+ Nxh5! 22.Bxh8 f3! 23.gxf3 Nf4! (D)



37

The concentrated attack of Black's pieces must be decisive.

If now 24.Re1, Black has a lovely finish with 24…Bh3! 25.Be5 Rg2+ 26.Kf1 Rf2+ 27.Kg1 Rf1+! 28.Rxf1 Ne2#!.

24.Be5 Rg2+ 25.Kf1 Rf2+ 26.Ke1 Nd3+ White resigns.

Black wins the bishop, leaving White in a hopeless situation.

A fascinating game because of the way that Black spiked the unfamiliar gambit attack and seized the initiative. (The Black pieces were played by Jose Raul Capablanca.) **Diverting the Gambit Attack**

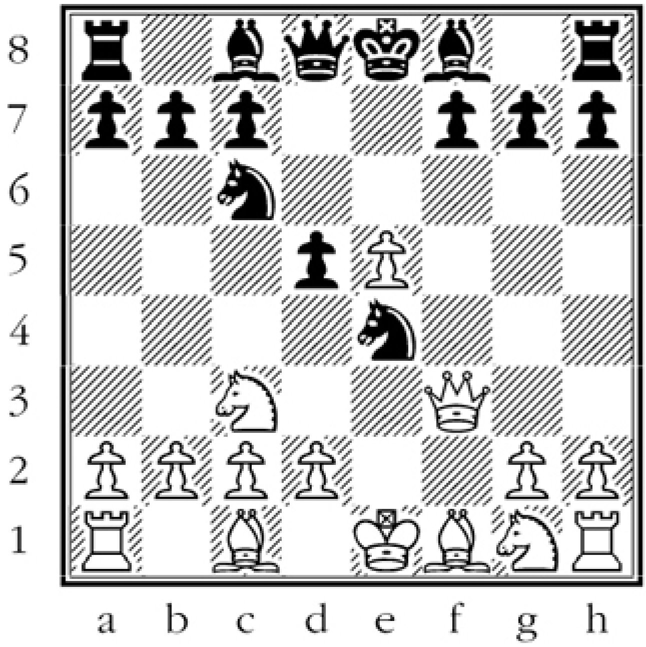
Though artless greed proves White's undoing in this game, Black deserves lots of credit for leading him astray. On move 3 Black is offered material, which he respectfully declines. Then, only two moves later, *he* is offering material!

Soon Black has a surprisingly powerful initiative which results in a convincing win. Above all, note how he refuses to be appeased by material gain, and always searches for the most incisive move.

Vienna Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.fxe5 Nxe4 5.Qf3 Nc6! (D)



38

Black plays boldly for counterattack, instead of being concerned about his doubly attacked knight at e4.

Black knows, to be sure, that 6.Bb5 is White's best reply – but he hopes that White will play 6.Nxe4? expecting 6…Nxe5?? when 7.Qg3! wins a piece!

6.Nxe4? Nd4! 7.Qf4 dxe4

If now 8.Qxe4?? Bf5 when Black wins.

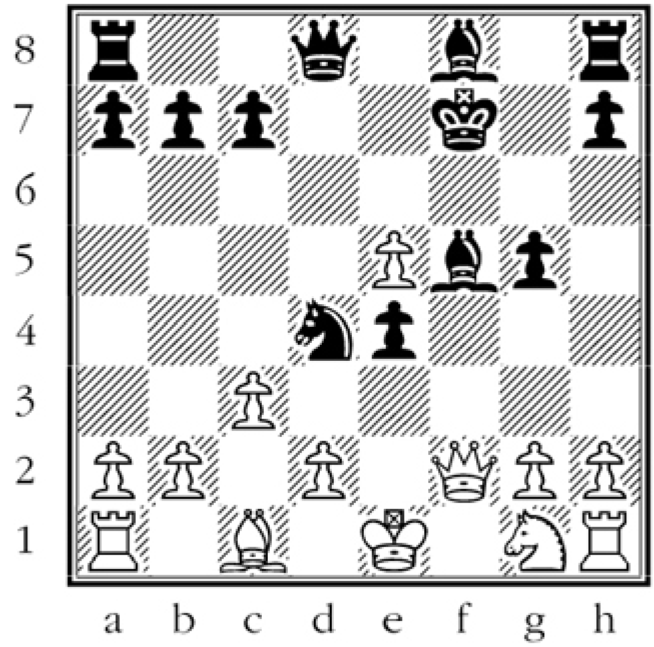
8.Bc4 Bf5 9.c3!? g5!

Black is too crafty to snap at 9…Nc2+ 10.Kd1 Nxa1 11.Qxf5, for in that case White threatens mate, with plenty of time to pick up the wandering black knight afterwards.

10.Bxf7+

In the event of 10.Qf1 (in reply to Black's last move), Black has the delightful line 10…Nc2+ 11.Kd1??? Ne3+ winning White's queen.

10…Kxf7 11.Qf2 (D)



39

Should Black play to win more material?

Again, Black has the tempting 11…Nc2+ within his reach. But after 12.Kd1 Nxa1 13.Qxf5+ Kg7 he is bound to lose his wandering knight and his king is somewhat exposed.

So, Black correctly reasons, he is not going to part with his initiative for such a doubtful gain. Instead, he hits hard with: **11…e3!!**

The first point of Black's sly idea is this: 12.Qxe3??? Nc2+ winning White's queen! Another fine point of Black's plan is that though he must apparently lose a piece when his knight moves, he manages to hold on to his material advantage.

12.Qf1 exd2+!

Black continues to find the strongest moves. If now 13.Bxd2, Black replies now 13…Nc2+ with a decisive gain of material – or even a mate in some cases.

13.Kd1 dxc1Q+ 14.Kxc1 g4! 15.b4

Black would not mind 15.cxd4, for then he could force mate by 15…Bh6+ 16.Kd1 Qxd4+ etc.

15…Qg5+ 16.Kd1 Rd8!

White resigns in this hopeless situation, 17.cxd4 Rxd4+ being obviously disastrous for him.

Black’s brisk counterattack made mincemeat out of White’s slovenly set-up.

Neutralizing White’s Initiative

In this game, as in the previous one, Black’s initiative is the deciding factor. But the mechanics of victory are different. In the previous game Black tempted White to succumb to fatal greed; while in this game White fails because he loses time in the opening.

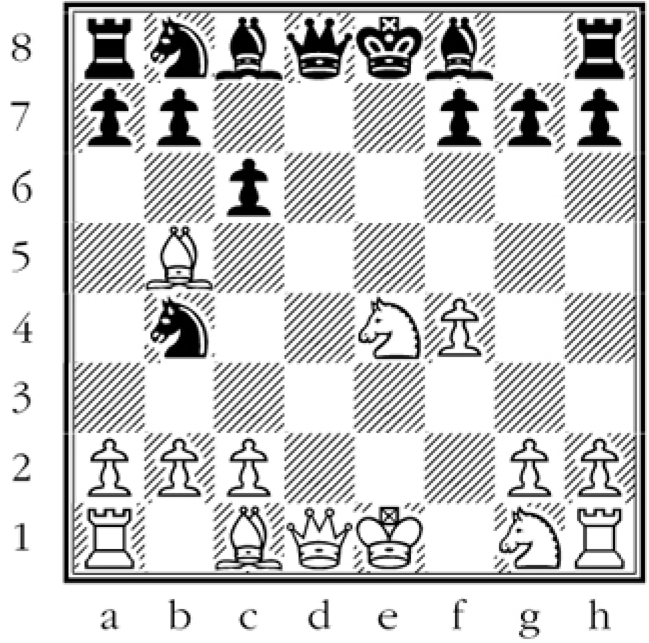
Note, too, that Black’s play here is just as consistent, just as grimly efficient, as in the previous game. But instead of spectacular play we have here Black’s smooth, logical, irresistible piling up of pressure that leaves White helpless.

Falkbeer Counter Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 d5 3.exd5 e4 4.d3 Nf6 5.Nd2 exd3 6.Bxd3 Nxd5 7.Ne4 Nb4! 8.Bb5+ c6!

Black’s shrewd thrust at move 7 has given him the initiative, which cannot be taken away from him even by the simplifying exchange of queens. (D)

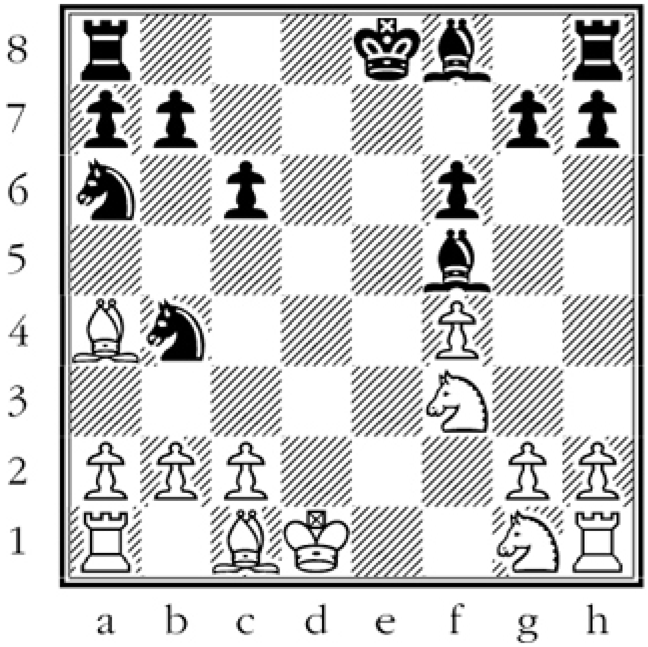


40

Despite the coming exchange of queens, Black already has his opponent on the defensive.

White’s game is already in need of vitamins. Certainly there is no chance for the dashing kind of play White seeks when he plays such a gambit.

9.Qxd8+ Kxd8 10.Ba4 Bf5 11.Ng5 Ke8 12.Kd1 f6 13.N5f3 N8a6! (D)



41

Black's position gathers power from move to move.

Thanks to Black's forceful play, White's original lead in development has evaporated and his pieces are awkwardly placed.

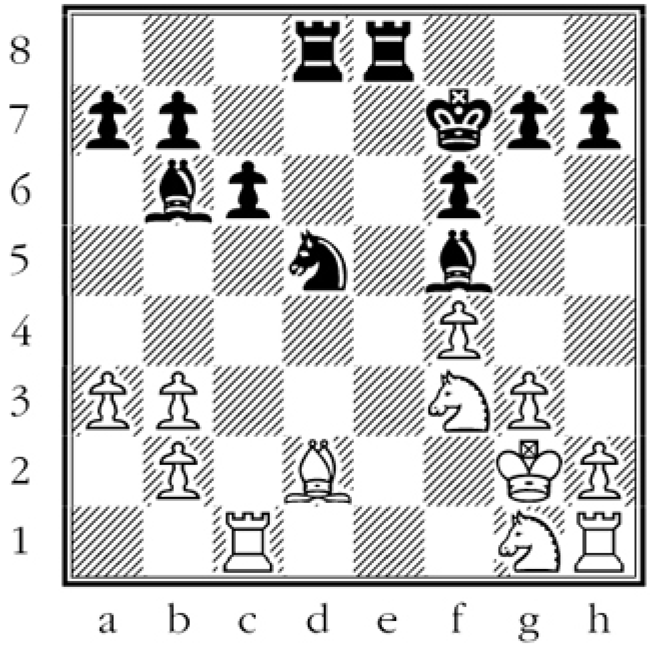
With skillful change of pace Black has alternated between attacking and developing moves. He is now ready for …Nc5 and also …Rd8. These moves will increase his positional advantage.

14.a3 Rd8+ 15.Bd2 Nd5 16.Ke2 Nc5 17.Bb3 Nxb3 18.cxb3 Bd6

Black keeps hammering away at White's game. Now that Black has two bishops against bishop and knight, he proceeds to use the bishops to press down all the harder on White's position.

19.g3 Kf7 20.Rc1 Bc7 21.Kf2 Bb6+ 22.Kg2 Rhe8 (D)

Note how Black's bishops have become stronger.

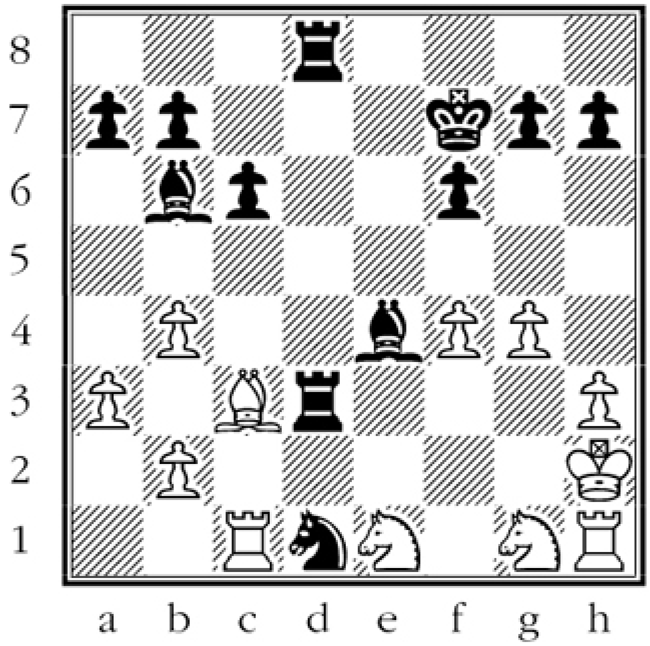


42

Black has all his pieces in magnificent play and continues to pile on the pressure relentlessly. White, on the other hand, is still unable to develop his king knight and king rook at this late date.

Now Black continues in the same forceful style to wind up with a crushing finish.

23.h3 Ne3+ 24.Kh2 Rd3 25.b4 Red8 26.Bc3 Nd1 27.g4 Be4 28.Ne1 (D)



43

Black must come out at least a piece ahead.

28…Rd2+! Black resigns.

After 29.Bxd2 Rxd2+ Black wins pretty much as he pleases.

The moral we derive from all these games is that in gambits, the initiative matters most of all. What we have seen in this chapter is that Black is most likely to succeed when he spots the factors that will give him the initiative; when he fights consistently for these advantages; and when he hits hard, once he has achieved those advantages.

These are the ways in which Black successfully hammers away at gambits.

Chapter Four

How to Defend Against a Powerful Attack

A famous English philosopher once wrote, “He is happy whose circumstances suit his temper; but he is more excellent who can suit his temper to any circumstance.”

So it is with chessplayers. They love to attack above all; they want to attack at all times, and at all costs. But this kind of chess is akin to an exclusive diet of nesselrode pie.

Chess positions are of all kinds, and we cannot always choose what kind of game we are going to have. If we dislike certain types of positions, our gleeful opponents will be sure to inflict them on us.

Defensive ability is an important quality in chessplayers, and one that will give satisfaction and win many points. Besides, though some of us may flinch from defensive tasks, we really have the determination and perseverance to fight through to victory in a defensive position.

Of course, at some point or other a well-conducted defense must take the form of dynamic counterattack, or even outright attack. This is the reward and even the duty of good defensive play. The following examples show you how it’s done.

Maneuvering in a Crowded Position

Crowded positions are undesirable because your pieces cannot operate to the best advantage. A great master was fond of saying that “crowded positions carry within themselves the germ of defeat.” By this he meant that a player afflicted with a cramped position would gradually be pushed to the wall.

The best way to handle a crowded position is to avoid it. But all the best principles and maxims in the world cannot save us from sometimes getting into unfavorable or difficult situations.

If your pieces are in a crowded position, you must always be on the lookout for opportunities to free yourself. This is easier said than done, for you may look and look for many moves, while the opportunity for freedom may come at only one point and may be rather hidden at that.

Nevertheless the advice is valuable: *watch for a chance to free yourself.* To be aware of the difficulty and to be determined to solve it, is often half the battle. If you can figure out the freeing method in advance, that is a great help.

Here is a useful hint, illustrated in the following game: *the thrust for freedom will generally come in the center.*

Old Indian Defense

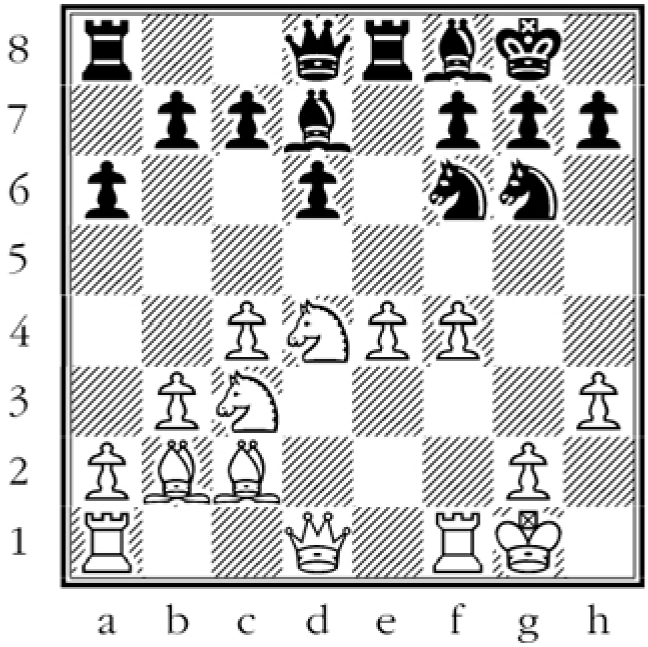
White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 d6 3.Nf3 Nbd7 4.Nc3 e5 5.e4 Be7 6.Bd3 0-0 7.0-0 exd4!? 8.Nxd4 Re8

Black "surrendered the center" on move 7. He now has no pawn on the fifth rank, while White has two pawns on the fourth rank.

The result is White's pawns control more center squares than Black's pawns do. Black's pieces have less maneuvering space in the center than White's pieces do.

9.b3 Ne5 10.Bc2 a6 11.Bb2 Bd7 12.h3 Bf8 13.f4 Ng6 (D)



44

Black must now maneuver ingeniously in the center.

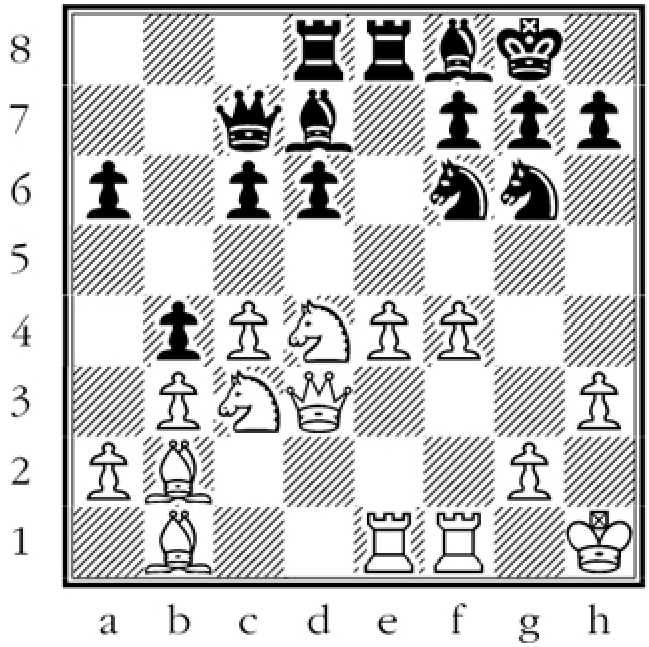
Black's position looks uncomfortably cramped, but he has his compensations. By attacking White's e-pawn, he limits White's freedom of action. Also, Black is well posted to prevent the aggressive advance e4-e5.

But Black has other ideas. His main idea is to free himself some time later by …d5. First he must play …c6 to make that move possible. Second, he must play …d5 at a time when the powerful reply e4-e5 is not feasible. The latter course of the game will show how Black carries out his idea.

14.Qf3 c6! 15.Rae1 b5! 16.Qd3 Qc7 17.Kh1

Black's judgment has been vindicated. White's development looks very impressive, but with e4-e5 or f4-f5 ruled out, Black has little to fear.

(Why is f4-f5 ruled out? Because the move allows …Ne5, giving one of the black knights a magnificent and unassailable center post.) **17…Rad8 18.Bb1 b4!** (D)



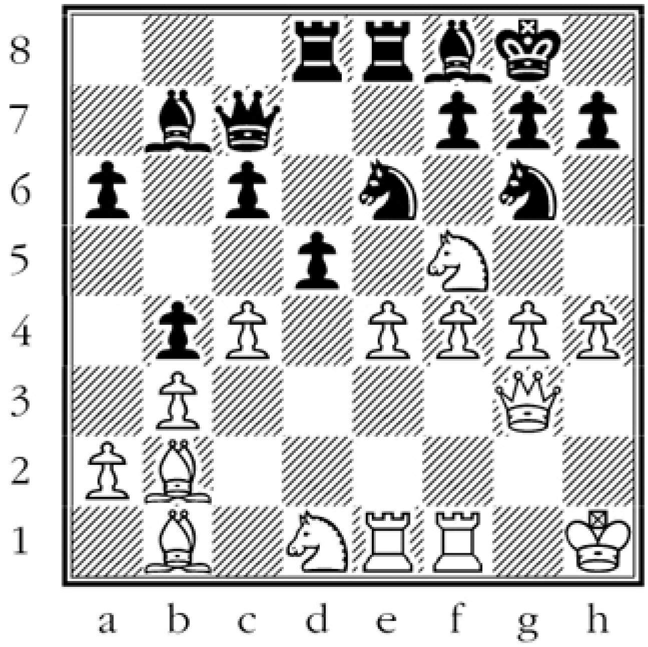
45

Black is gradually freeing his position. Black has made considerable progress. By driving off White's queen knight, he brings himself an important step nearer to playing …d5. (White will now have one piece less bearing down on the important d5-square.) Black has scored another point as well. By making White's b3-b4 impossible, he is able to establish a black knight on the c5-square. From that point the knight will bear down strongly on the center.

19.Nd1 Bc8! 20.Qf3 Nd7! 21.Nf5 Nc5! 22.g4? Ne6!

Already taking advantage of White’s weakening 22nd move, Black attacks the f-pawn and prepares for the final freeing maneuver.

23.Qg3 Bb7! 24.h4 d5!! (D)



46

Black has freed his game!

At just the idea moment, and with the maximum amount of impact, Black has freed his game.

Note that 24…d5!! is very strong because it opens up the diagonal leading to White’s king. Consequently this brings Black’s cooped-up bishop at b7 into powerful play.

Note also that Black gains time by playing 24…d5!! since he is attacking White’s f-pawn. Note, finally, that White’s reaction of 25.e5 loses all impact because of Black’s grip on the long diagonal.

25.e5 c5! 26.cxd5 Rxd5

Now that the diagonal of his bishop at b7 is fully open, Black threatens all sorts of brutal discovered checks, such as …Rxd1+ or …Rd3+.

Black has arranged matters so cunningly that he can answer 27.Be4 with 27…Rxd1! and wins.

27.Kg1 Rd2! 28.Nfe3

Something had to be done about the threat of …Rg2+. (In the event of 28.Rf2, Black has a winning reply in 28…Red8.) But Black's next move (menacing …Qh1#!) forces White's surrender.

28…Qc6! 29.Rf3 Qxf3 White resigns.

Black's skillful maneuvering in his crowded position was extremely impressive. He knew he had to free his game and he knew how to go about it.

Defense by Counterattack

When you play the black pieces, you are frequently called upon to make a sharp, accurate appraisal of what your opponent is aiming for.

We more or less take it for granted that White has the birthright of the attack, and that he is entitled to the initiative. However, there is no guarantee that White's judgment is always sound, and that his execution of the attack is always impeccable.

As player of the black pieces, it is your job to assess the position; decide how much stress it can afford; coolly weigh the likely success or failure of White's efforts. If you conclude that the attack will be insufficient, you can look for counterattack.

Should you decide that White's efforts on the kingside are unlikely to succeed, you can counterattack on the other side of the board. Such queenside counterattacks are quite common. In the following game Black carries out this plan with commendable skill.

Queen's Gambit Declined

White – Black

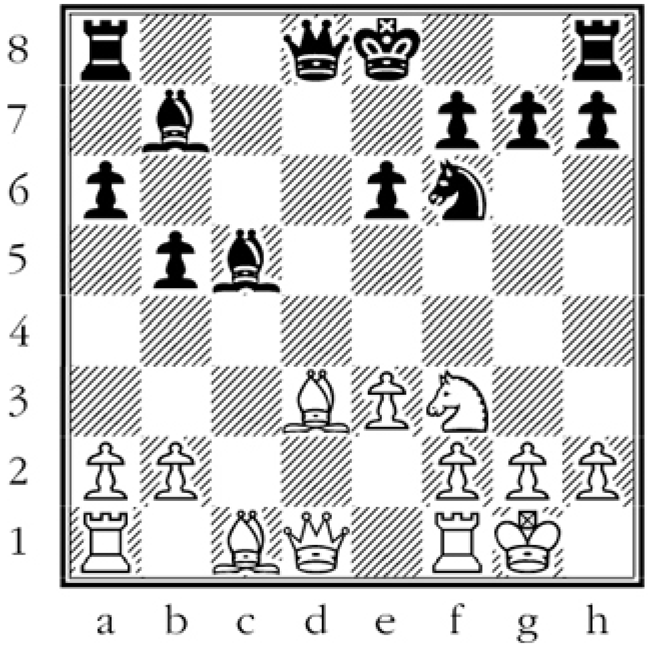
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 c6 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Bd3 dxc4 7.Bxc4 b5 8.Bd3 a6

Black's light-square bishop is blocked by his pawn at e6. His last three moves have been directed toward opening a new, clear diagonal for the bishop. Black needs one more move (…c5!) to achieve this objective.

9.Ne4

White's most forceful line is 9.e4 c5 10.e5 cxd4 11.Nxb5 with a complicated game.

9…c5! 10.dxc5? Nxc5 11.Nxc5 Bxc5 12.0-0 Bb7 (D)



47

Black is ahead in development!

How did Black obtain his lead in development? He took advantage of White’s faulty maneuver in moving his queen knight three times – only to exchange it off.

White’s tenth move was another time waster, aiding Black’s development.

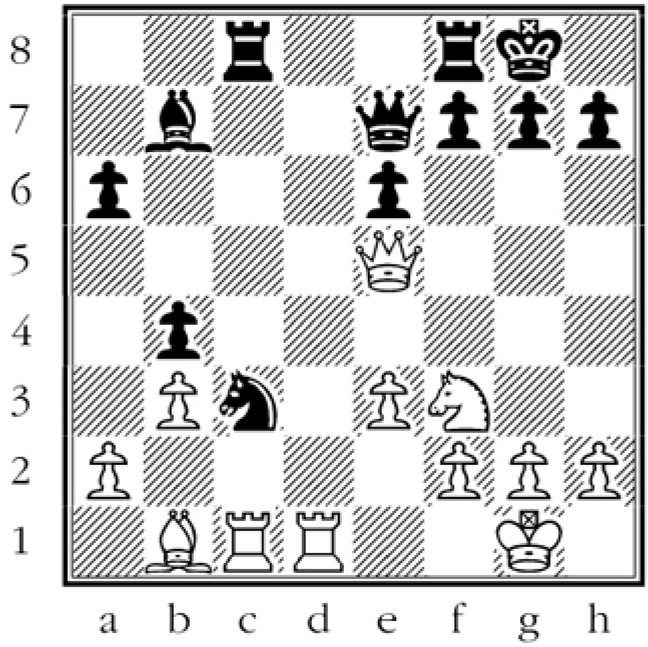
White ought to take a very modest view of this situation. Instead, he strives for attack.

Is Black impressed? Not at all. With his lead in development and perfectly solid king-side position, he need not fear any coming attack.

13.b3 0-0 14.Bb2 Qe7 15.Rc1 Rac8 16.Qe2 Ba3!

Black intends to concentrate on the queenside. By removing White’s protective dark-square bishop he will be able to play …Nd5 and …Nc3, planting the knight with great effect in White’s position.

17.Rfd1 Nd5! 18.Bb1 Bxb2 19.Qxb2 b4! 20.Qe5 Nc3! (D)

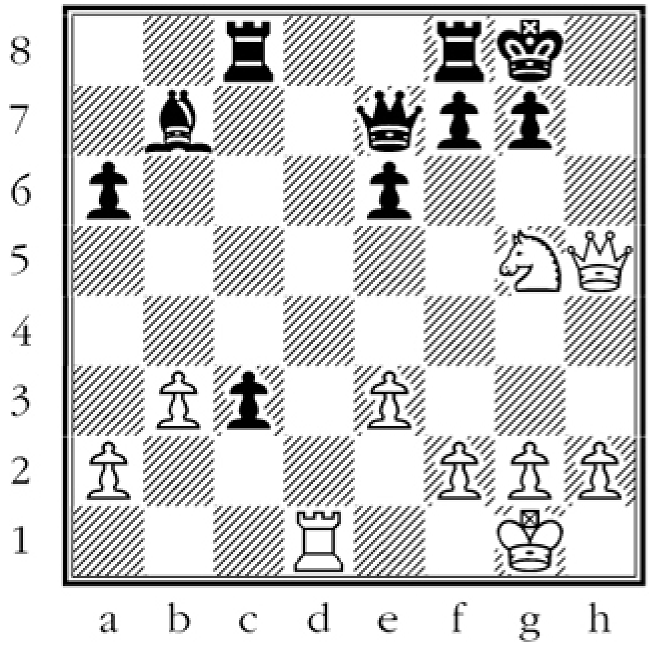


48

Black has achieved his objective on the queenside.

Black has a won game, for if now 21.Rd2 or 21.Re1, he plays 21…Ne2+! with decisive effect. White must therefore carry out the attack he has been plotting for some time.

21.Rxc3 bxc3! 22.Bxh7+ Kxh7 23.Qh5+ Kg8 24.Ng5 (D)



49

Black is threatened with mate on the move.

Black must do something about the threat of 25.Qh7#.

24…Be4!!

This nonsensical-looking move is actually a brilliant resource that gains a priceless tempo. (After White’s reply he will no longer threaten mate!) **25.Nxe4 c2 26.Rc1 Rfd8!**

Black avoids a sly trap here: if 26…Qa3?? 27.Nf6+! gxf6 28.Qg4+ and White forces a perpetual check.

27.h3

On 27.h4 Black planned 27…Qa3 28.Ng5 Qxc1+ 29.Kh2 Rc7 and White has nothing: 30.Qh7+ Kf8 31.Qh8+ Ke7. Black is then safe, with an overwhelming material advantage.

(Black could win by the same line after the move actually played by White; but he prefers a different, prettier line.) **27…f5 28.Ng5 Qxg5! 29.Qxg5 Rd1+ 30.Kh2**

Here we have the point of Black’s queen sacrifice. If 30.Rxd1 cxd1Q+ and Black is a rook ahead.

30…Rxc1 White resigns.

A masterly effort by Black. He appraised the situation correctly; this led him to start a queenside demonstration which soon showed up the futility of White’s efforts.

Note that Black’s queenside demonstration resulted in the passed pawn which eventually won the game for Black.

Defending Against a Violent Attack

Very often a chessplayer is called upon to defend himself against a violent attack. In the nature of things, Black is generally the player who has to do the defending.

For most of us, defense is an irksome chore. It requires lasting attention; it puts you under great strain; it gives you the double task of not only foreseeing your future defensive resources, but also foreseeing your opponent’s future attacking resources!

However, good defensive play is highly rewarding. So few players have mastered it that possessing this skill puts you ahead of your opponents. Good defensive play salvages many a game that is really lost or one that only looks lost.

Too many players forget that attack is only a part of chess, and that we cannot always have the kind of positions we like. If you have patience and faith in the resisting power of defensive positions, you will win many more games.

The following example shows what can be done to hold the fort against an attack which is persistent, forceful, and inventive.

Bishop’s Gambit

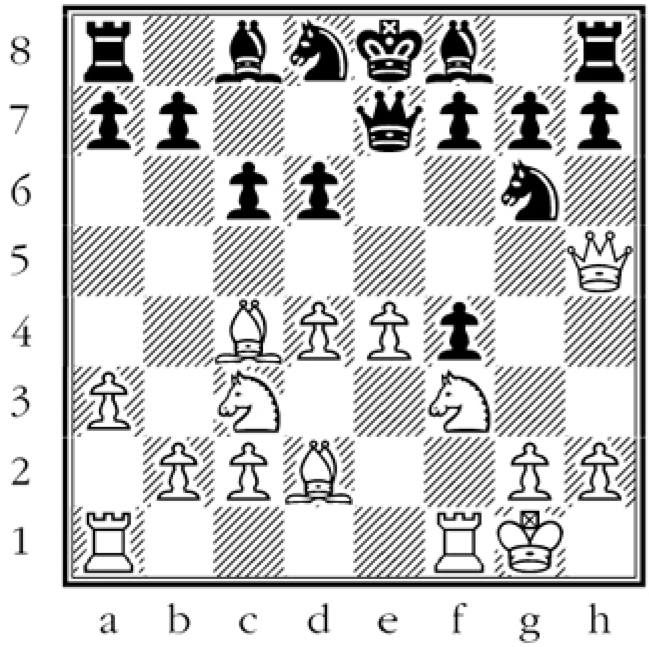
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Bc4 Ne7 4.Qh5 Ng6 5.Nc3 Qe7 6.d4 Nc6 7.Nf3 Qb4 8.Qd5 Nd8

As you can see, Black is very tenacious. He has captured the gambit pawn on move 2, and he means to hold on to it no matter what difficulties may arise to plague him.

This type of defense against a gambit is not recommended in Chapter 3; but it is precisely this kind of stubbornness that will lead to a very cramped game for Black – the kind of position we want to study at this point.

9.a3 Qe7 10.0-0 d6 11.Qh5 c6 12.Bd2 (D)



50

Black plans to castle on the queenside.

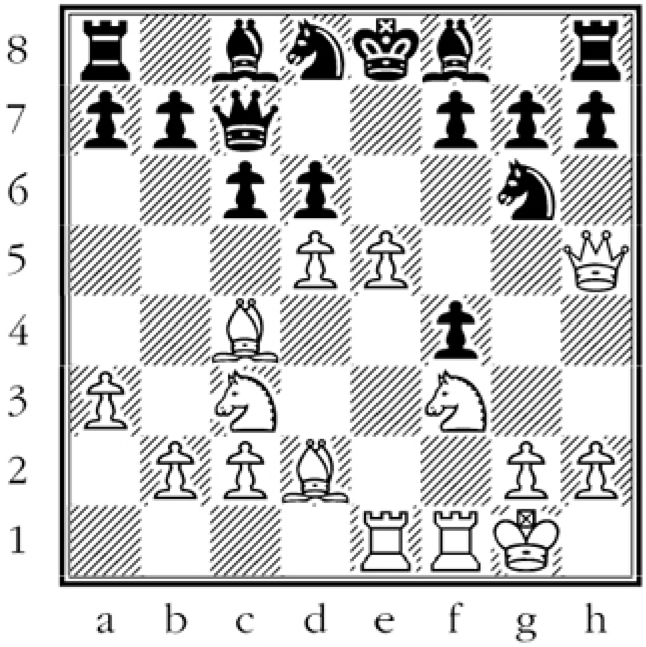
Black is far behind in development, and he must plan to get his king into safety before White finds some violent method to open up the center lines.

Black therefore gets the idea of preparing for queenside castling. However, White spoils this plan.

12…Ne6 13.Rae1! Qc7!

Black realizes that his plan won't work: if 13…Bd7 14.d5! Nc7 15.dxc6 bxc6 and his queenside is too exposed for castling there.

14.d5 Nd8 15.e5 (D)



51

Black's position looks lost!

It would seem that Black cannot defend his king against White's vigorous onslaught in the center. Most players would give up hope here, but Black has just begun to fight.

15…dxe5! 16.Nxe5 Bc5+! 17.Kh1 0-0 18.dxc6

The way Black saved himself from disaster by finding a way to castle verges on the miraculous!

But he is by no means out of danger. For example, if now 18…bxc6? 19.Nxg6 hxg6 20.Qxc5 and White has won a piece. However, Black finds a magnificent counterstroke in this critical situation: **18…Be3!!**

Attacking White's undefended bishop. If now 19.Bxe3 (the natural reply) 19…Qxe5! and no matter how White plays, he loses a piece! For example, 20.Qxe5 Nxe5 and both white bishops are attacked.

The consequence is that White decides to sacrifice a piece to keep the attack boiling at full force. True, Black’s position is still full of hazard, but now White has to take chances too.

19.Nf3 Bxd2!

With this move Black gives his opponent an unpleasant choice. If now 20.Nxd2 bxc6 and White’s attack has petered out ingloriously, with Black triumphantly clutching his extra (gambit) pawn.

So, White decides to sacrifice a piece – a psychological victory for Black.

20.Ng5! h6

The only reply to White’s threat of mate on the move.

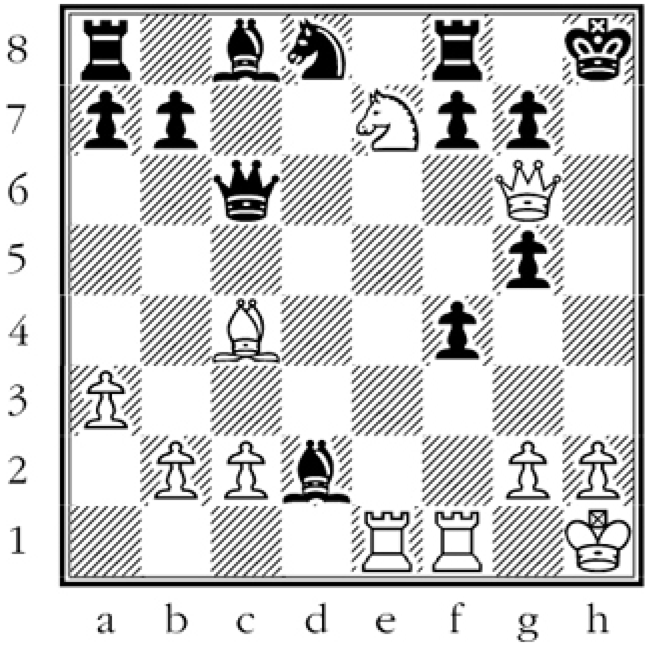
21.Qxg6 hxg5 22.Nd5!

Attacking Black’s queen and also threatening 23.Nf6+ Kh8 24.Qh7#. But even in this crisis Black finds a way out. Black can escape by 22…fxg6 23.Nxc7+ Kh7 24.Nxa8 Bxe1, but he prefers to fight it out in the hardest variation.

22…Qxc6!

Black is not afraid of the following forking check!

23.Ne7+ Kh8 (D)



52

Black is still holding his own!

Black’s resourceful defense holds in every line.

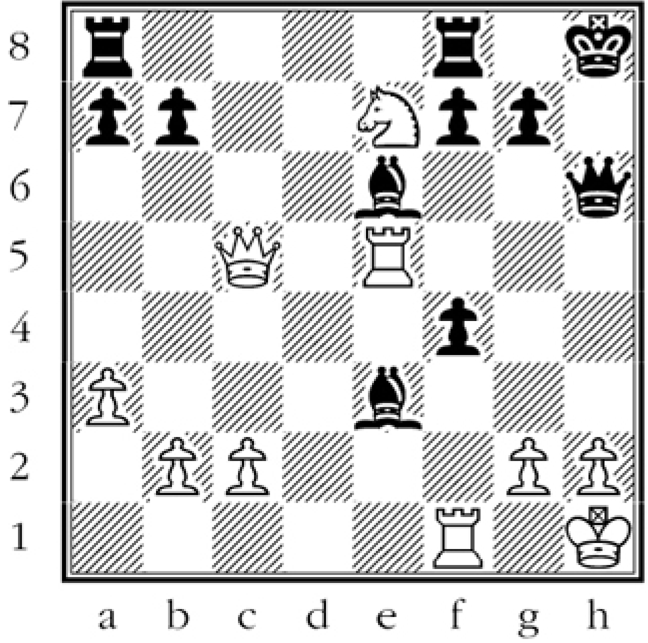
Thus if 24.Nxc6 fxg6 and he remains a piece ahead. Or 24.Qh5+ Qh6 with the same result. Finally – and this was the crucial variation calculated by Black – if 24.Bxf7 Nxf7! 25.Nxc6 Bxe1 26.Ne7! Bd2 27.Qh5+ Nh6 28.Ng6+ Kg8 29.Nxf8 Kxf8 and Black's material advantage of three minor pieces against the queen should win the game for him.*

24.Qxg5 Qh6! 25.Qc5 Ne6

Directed against the threat of 26.Ng6+. White is still making attacking gestures, but Black has the game well in hand.

26.Bxe6 Bxe6 27.Re5 Be3!

White was threatening to win Black's queen with Rh5. But now Black is ready to seize the attack. (D)



53

Black has survived the storm of attacking threats.

28.Qb5 g6! 29.Qxb7 Kg7

Now the initiative is in Black's hands. He threatens 30…Qxh2+!! 31.Kxh2 Rh8+ and mate next move.

30.Qf3 Rad8 31.h3 Qh4 32.Nc6 Bg4! 33.Qxg4 Qxg4 34.hxg4 Rh8+ 35.Rh5 gxh5 White resigns.

This game, a masterpiece of superb defensive play, shows what can be accomplished by tenacious and ingenious defense. Few games will ever call for such difficult maneuvering in the face of so powerful an attack.

The King as a Fighting Piece

The most important of all our defensive jobs is protecting the king from harm. Though most players err on the side of neglecting this task, they sometimes go to the other extreme and become too cautious.

There are times when firmness and daring are called for – times when routine caution is not good enough. In the following extraordinary game, Black is well aware of the need for bold handling of his king.

Caro-Kann Defense

White – Black

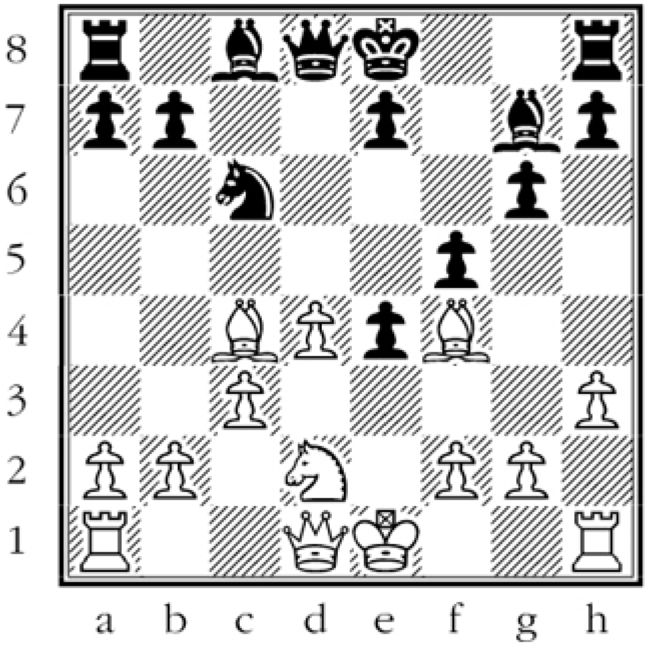
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c3 Nc6 5.Bf4 Nf6 6.Nd2 g6 7.Ngf3 Bg7 8.h3 Ne4

An adventurous move which leads to a very difficult game for Black.

9.Nxe4 dxe4 10.Nd2 f5

The only practicable way to guard the e-pawn; but after White's reply Black will be unable to castle.

11.Bc4! (D)



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Black is unable to castle.

As the position now stands, Black cannot get his king into a safe position and he cannot post his rooks for rapid action.

True, Black has a makeshift solution in 11…e6, which makes castling possible. But then the pawn at e6 is a lasting weakness – always under attack by White's bishop. Worse yet, Black's light-square bishop is then a permanent prisoner.

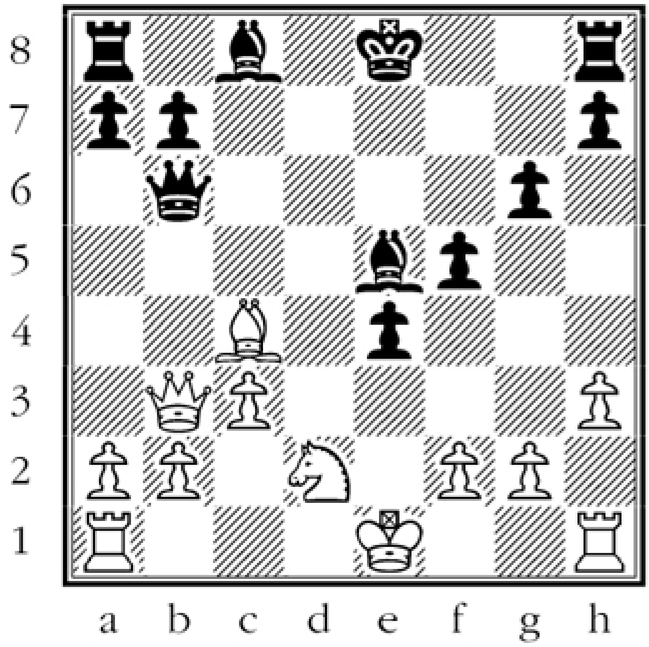
Black therefore comes to a courageous and highly unconventional decision:

11…e5!! 12.dxe5 Nxe5

This knight has to be captured, as Black threatens …Nxc4 or …Nd3+ with a fine game in either case.

13.Bxe5 Bxe5 14.Qb3 Qb6!

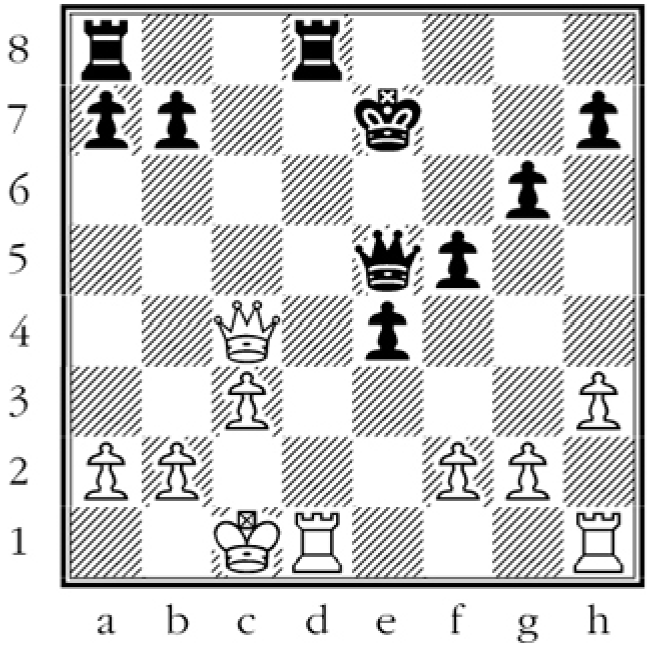
Naturally Black offers the exchange of queens, for then all danger to his king will vanish. (D)



55

Black's king is ready to embark on a long tour.

15.Bb5+ Ke7! 16.Nc4 Qc5 17.Nxe5 Qxe5 18.0-0-0 Be6 19.Bc4 Bxc4 20.Qxc4 Rhd8! (D)



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Black’s king is about to advance fearlessly. Black’s last move is a daring one; his king is about to end up in the opponent’s camp. The brilliant originality of Black’s plan is that he foresees that his king, paradoxically enough, will be quite safe.

21.Qb4+ Kf6!!

The only correct move. Black realizes that if his king goes to f7, his b-pawn is lost with check. If his king goes to e8, White plays Qxb7 threatening Qxh7 followed by Qxg6+.

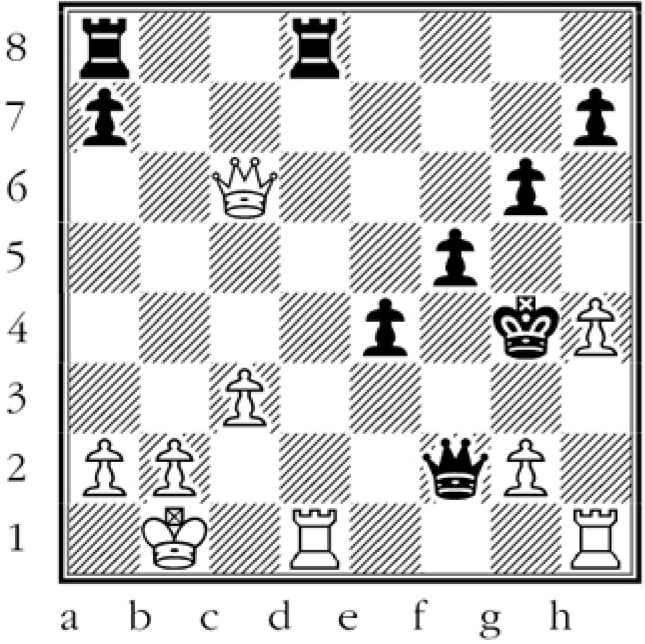
22.Qxb7 Qf4+ 23.Kb1 Qxf2

As a result of this capture Black has a passed e-pawn which is ready to march down to the queening square as soon as the storm has passed. This means, in technical language, that White has a lost game in prospect unless he can win by attack. Consequently, the safety of Black’s king is the key factor in the following play.

Black does not fear 24.Qxh7, for his g-pawn is guarded thanks to his 21st move. Furthermore, if 24.Qxh7, Black replies 24…Qxg2 with *two connected passed pawns* – an overwhelming positional advantage. So White tries a different way.

24.Qc6+ Kg5! 25.h4+ Kg4!

Black's king, as a fighting piece, heads for White's kingside pawns. There is now a possibility that Black's king will be able later on to attack White's pawns (…Kg3 etc.). (D)



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Black's king is attacking!

26.Rdf1 Qb6!

Offering the exchange of queens; this is about the same as inviting White to commit suicide. White's reply threatens 28.Qe2+ and 29.Rh3#!

27.Qc4 Rd2!

Black parries the mating threat and menaces mate on his own. Black now wins easily by stepping up the pressure.

28.b4 Qe3 29.Rh3 Qb6 30.Rhf3 Rxg2 31.Rf4+ Kg3! 32.Qd5 Rc8 33.Qd7 Qa6

White resigns. (If 34.a4 Qc4.) One of the most original games ever played, and one of the finest examples of cool, resourceful chess under very trying circumstances.

Recovery from a Lost Position

So far we have seen some very fine play by Black. In actual practice, of course, his play is not always so fine. Often, indeed, he plays badly and finds himself with a lost game. Yet he must not give up in despair after such poor play, for there is often a possibility of redeeming the most disastrous situations. And, as far as the score table is concerned, a botched game that is resourcefully salvaged is worth just as much as a masterpiece.

King’s Indian Defense

White – Black

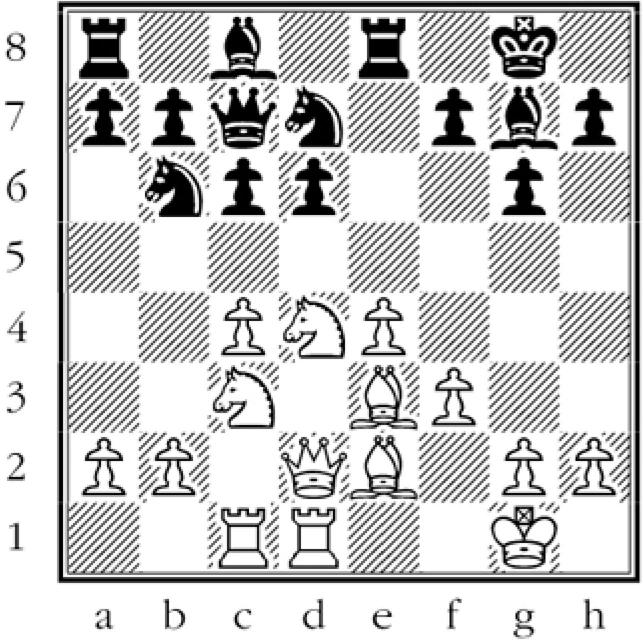
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Be2 e5 7.0-0 exd4 8.Nxd4

Black has exchanged pawns early in order to provide a long, free diagonal for his fianchettoed bishop. This exchange is questionable, however, as White’s pieces obtain great freedom of action.

With his tenth move (…c6) Black weakens his d-pawn. His intentions, to be sure, are of the best: he wants to make room for the queen so that he can assure communication between his rooks.

8…Re8 9.f3 Nbd7 10.Bg5 c6 11.Qd2 Qb6 12.Be3 Qc7 13.Rac1 Nb6 14.Rfd1 Nfd7

As we anticipated, Black finds his position cramped. He is not clear about what he wants or what he can achieve, and his maneuvering and regrouping is not getting him very far. His last move gives White the opportunity for a very promising attack. (D)



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Black has overlooked White’s combination.

15.Ndb5!

This is the move that Black failed to foresee.

15…cxb5 16.Nxb5 Qd8

Black is on the run now.

17.Nxd6 Ne5

To retreat 17…Rf8 allows White to recover his piece (with a pawn plus) by 18.Nxc8 Rxc8 19.c5 etc.

18.c5! Nbd7 19.c6?

The correct course – the one that Black feared – was 19.f4 Nc6 20.Bc4. In that case Black has a knight for two pawns but he can hardly move a piece. This course would have been fatal for him.

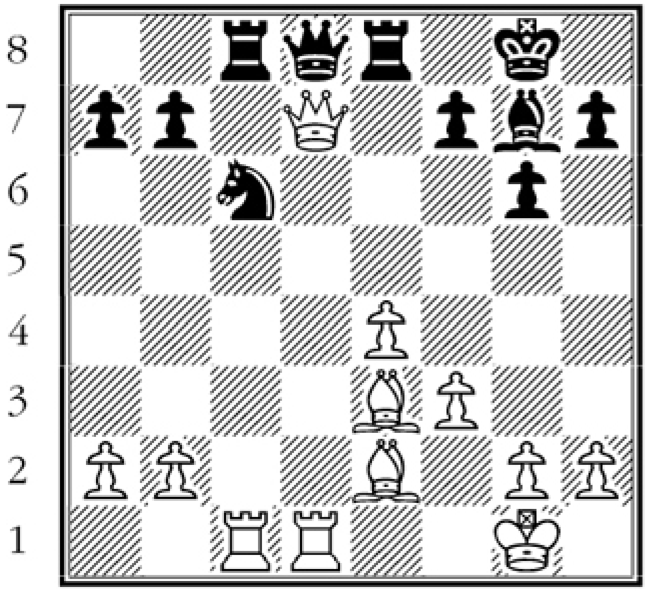
In playing as he does, White seeks to regain the sacrificed piece. He succeeds – but only on Black's terms.

19…Nxc6!

Black finds the best move. Note that 19…bxc6?? would be ruinous after 20.Nxe8 Qxe8 21.f4 etc.

20.Nxc8 Rxc8 21.Qxd7

White has regained his piece, but now comes Black's stunning refutation. (D)



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How does Black save the game?

21…Bd4!!

A masterstroke. If 22.Qxd8 Bxe3+ wins a piece for Black. And if 22.Bxd4? White loses his queen.

22.Rxd4 Nxd4 23.Bb5?

Now White’s best is 23.Qxd8 Nxe2+ 24.Kf2 Rexd8 when Black will win nevertheless with the exchange for a pawn. However, White goes to pieces: **23…Rxc1+ 24.Bxc1 Qxd7 25.Bxd7 Rd8 White resigns.**

For after the bishop leaves the d7-square, Black wins the other bishop by …Ne2+.

Black’s resilience in a very difficult situation is in striking contrast to White’s tragic collapse.

The games in this chapter have highlighted the cold-blooded resourcefulness that Black must bring to difficult defensive situations. Such positions are very trying; but, by virtue of their very difficulty, they present a challenge that is worth meeting and worth surmounting.

Chapter Five

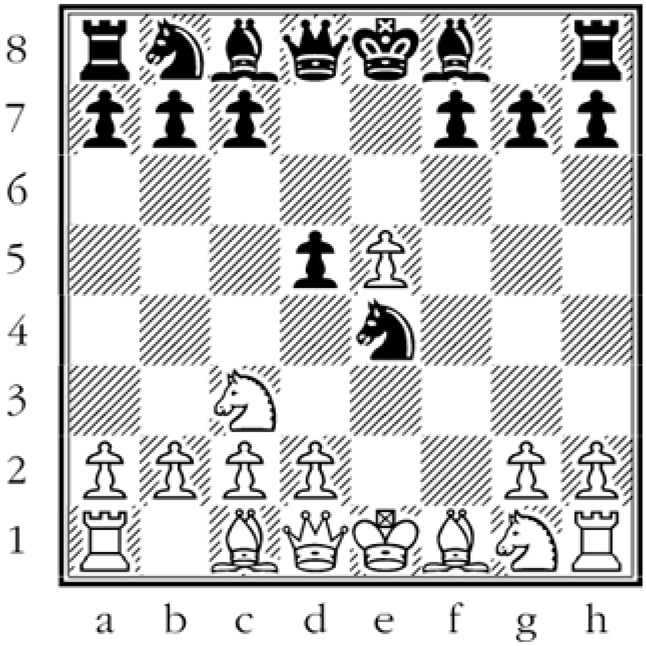
How to Seize the Attack

So far we have seen how Black defends, how he reacts to gambits, how he seizes the initiative, how he counterattacks. Now we want to see situations in which a serious flaw in White's game gives Black a chance for a slashing all-out attack.

One word of warning: when playing the black pieces, do not embark lightly on an attacking policy. Note in each of the following games that White compromises his game in some fashion, while Black maintains an impeccable position.

Exploiting White's Faulty Development

Vienna Game
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.fxe5 Nxe4 (D)



60

Black's knight is splendidly centralized.
5.Nf3 Nc6 6.Bd3? f5 7.exf6

White cannot very well play 7.Bxe4 now, as he would lose further time – and his e-pawn as well. He therefore captures Black's f-pawn in passing. This returns Black's king knight to the f6-square. But meanwhile White's d-pawn cannot advance. The result: at the end of the game, White's queen bishop and queen rook are still on their original squares.

7…Nxf6 8.0-0 Bc5+

Development with gain of time. Note that White is unable to reply d2-d4.

9.Kh1 0-0 10.Bb5 Ng4!

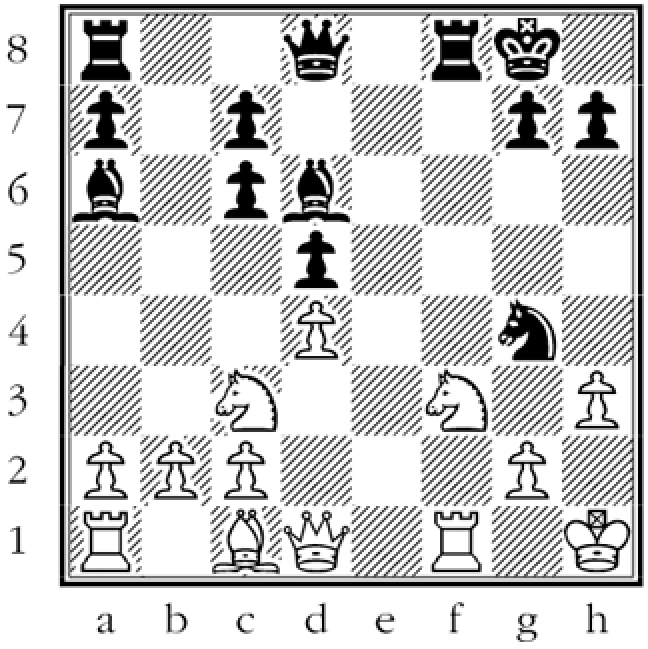
Threatening to win the exchange by …Nf2+. If White tries 11.d4, then 11…Nxd4 12.Nxd4 Rxf1+ 13.Qxf1 Bxd4 and Black is a pawn ahead.

Thus Black wrests another concession from White: giving up his developed bishop, White increases Black's lead in development and his attacking prospects.

11.Bxc6 bxc6 12.d4 Bd6

Black's attack has become very powerful; he threatens to win the exchange by …Ba6.

13.h3 Ba6!! (D)



61

Can Black afford to ignore the attack on his knight?

14.hxg4 Bxf1 15.Qxf1 Rxf3!!

With this sacrifice, Black establishes the soundness of his previous sacrifice. First point: if 16.gxf3, Black has a quick mate with 16…Qh4+ etc. Second point: if 16.Qxf3 Qh4+ – and now if 17.Qh3 Qe1#. Or 17.Kg1 Qe1+ 18.Qf1 Bh2+ winning White's queen.

But the best is yet to come.

16.Qe1 Qh4+!! 17.Qxh4 Rf1#

Thus we see that Black's brilliant attack succeeded because White's dark-square bishop remained at home.

Exploiting White's Neglected Development

This game is a joy to play over because Black never misses a chance to find an energetic move. His play is forceful but not brash. White, on the other hand, dawdles. First he hits out aimlessly – and then strikes at the wrong target.

Two Knights' Defense

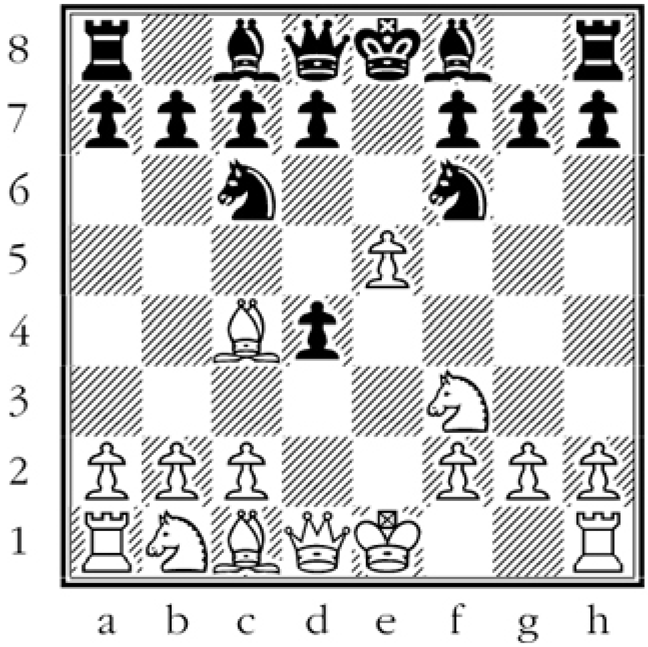
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Bc4 Nf6

Ignoring the defense of his d-pawn, Black strikes at White's e-pawn.

5.e5

White, too, intends to attack. (D)



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How does Black save his knight?

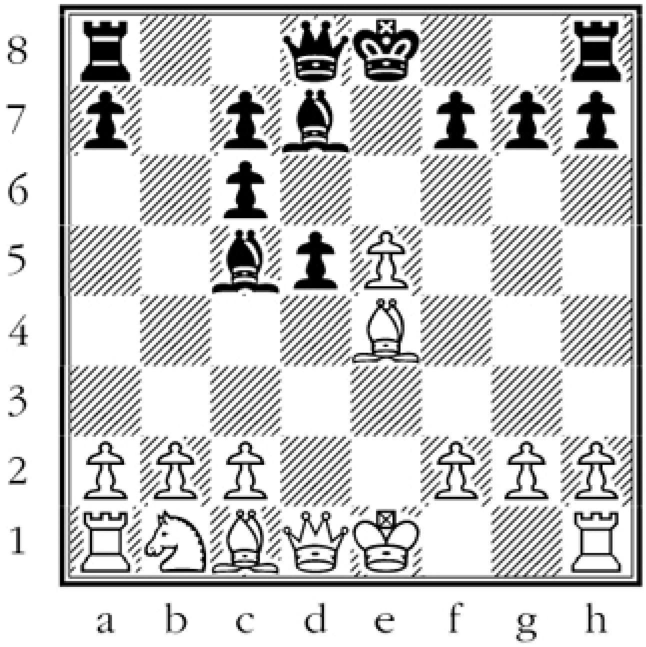
5…d5!

Instead of defending, Black attacks! – and opens up the diagonal of his light-square bishop at the same time.

6.Bb5 Ne4 7.Nxd4 Bd7 8.Nxc6 bxc6 9.Bd3 Bc5

Black’s obvious eagerness to attack is perfectly well grounded in the fact that he has two extra pieces in play.

10.Bxe4 (D)



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Should Black recapture?

10…Qh4!

The alternative 10…dxe4 is quite satisfactory, but Black’s queen move brings still another piece into play – threatening mate, by the way.

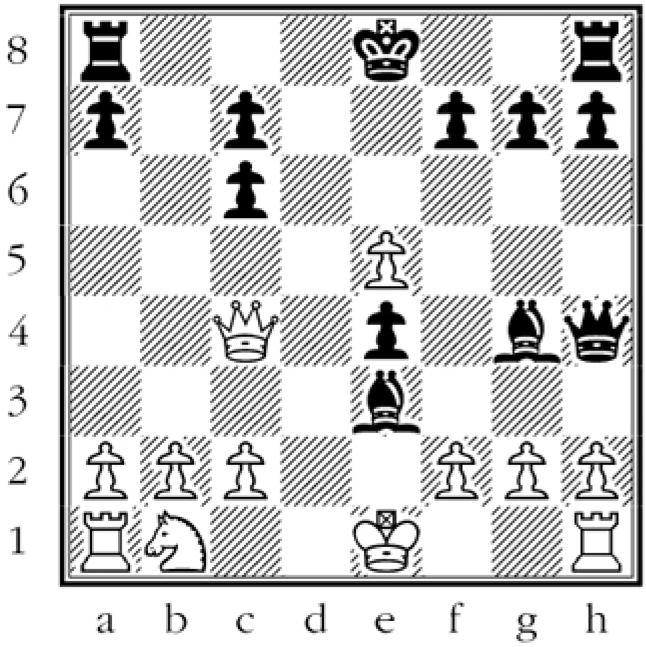
11.Qe2 dxe4 12.Be3 Bg4!

Forcing a crisis, for if 13.Qd2 Black leaves his opponent without an adequate reply by playing 13…Rd8.

13.Qc4

Apparently crushing: if Black moves his attacked bishop, the queen fork 14.Qxc6+ seems deadly.

13…Bxe3! (D)



64

Black has started a crisp winning combination.

On 14.Qxc6+ Black intends 14…Bd7!! 15.Qxa8+ Ke7!! 16.Qxh8 and Black forces mate beginning with 16…Qxf2+.

Suppose, however, White interposes 16.g3 in this variation? Then Black wins with 16…Bxf2+! 17.Kxf2 e3+!. If now 18.Kxe3 Qg5+ wins White's queen, and if 18.Kg1 e2! decides.

Finally, if 18.Ke1 Qb4+ 19.c3 Qxb2 20.Qxh8 Bg4! and Black forces mate.

14.g3 Qd8!! 15.fxe3 Qd1+ 16.Kf2 Qf3+ 17.Kg1

On 17.Ke1 Black had 17…Qxe3+ 18.Kf1 Bh3#.

17…Bh3! 18.Qxc6+ Kf8 19.Qxa8+ Ke7 White resigns.

White's queen is *en prise* and he cannot stop mate. Beautiful play by Black.

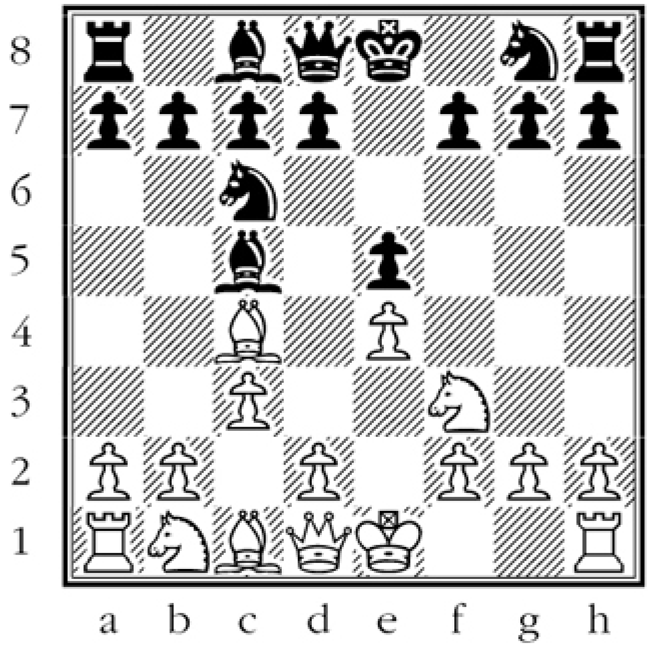
Exploiting White's Faulty Plan

Sometimes White gets a good development and then embarks on a faulty plan. It takes a sharp eye to see the flaw in White's procedure. In the following delightful game Black takes admirable advantage of White's shortcomings.

Giuoco Piano

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 (D)



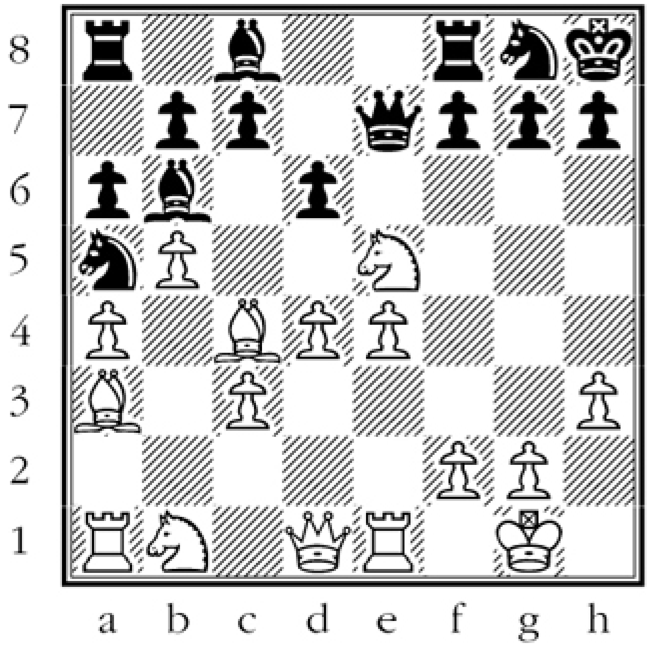
65

Black must decide on his policy in the center.

White intends to play d2-d4. Then, if Black exchanges pawns, White gets a powerful pawn center and an ideal development. Black therefore determines to avoid the exchange of pawns.

4…d6 5.0-0 Bb6! 6.d4 Qe7 7.a4 a6 8.h3 Nf6 9.Re1 0-0 10.b4 Kh8! 11.Ba3 Ng8! 12.b5 Na5! 13.Nxe5

Since 13…dxe5??? would lose the queen, Black seems to have blundered. How does he regain his pawn? (D)



Black seizes the attack.

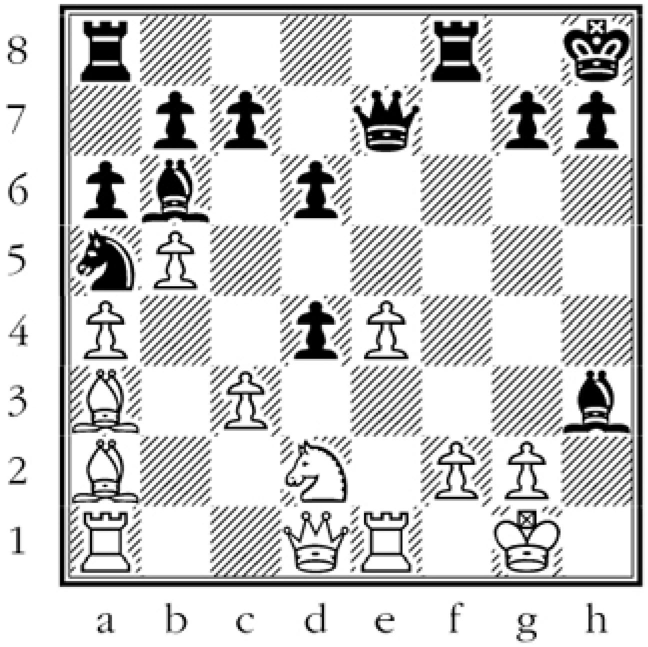
13…f6!

With this powerful reply Black completely turns the tables. If the attacked knight moves, Black wins a piece. Thus he forces White's reply.

14.Bxg8 fxe5! 15.Ba2 exd4 16.Nd2

If now 16.cxd4 Qf6 is much in Black's favor.

16…Bxh3! (D)


67

Black’s surprise sacrifice is only the beginning.

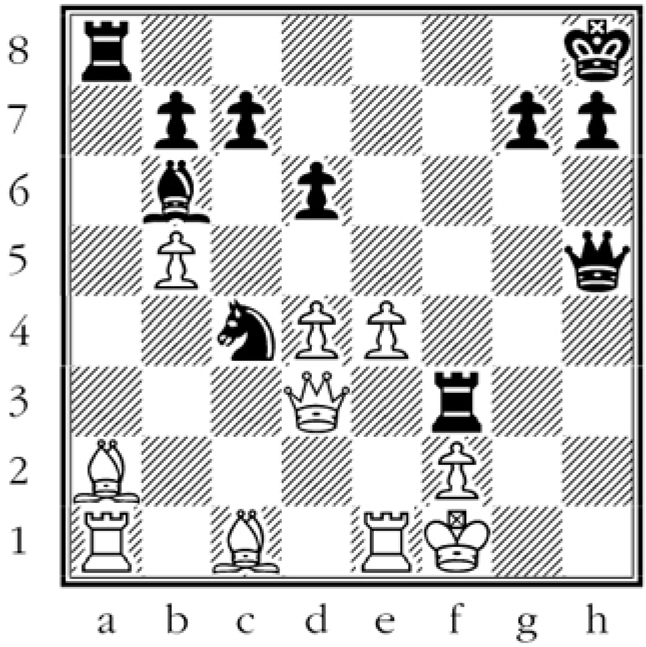
17.Nf3

On 17.gxh3 Black intends 17…Qg5+ 18.Kf1 Rxf2+!! 19.Kxf2 d3+ with a crushing attack.

17…Bg4 18.cxd4 axb5! 19.Qd3

For on 19.axb5 Black continues 19…Bxf3 20.gxf3 Qg5+ 21.Kf1 Qxb5+ and is ahead in material.

19…Bxf3 20.gxf3 Qg5+ 21.Kf1 Nc4! 22.Bc1 Qh5 23.axb5 Rxf3!! (D)



68

Black has given his opponent another unpleasant surprise.

The point of Black’s last sacrifice is that if 24.Qxc4, Black wins with 24…Rh3!.

24.Bxc4 Rxa1! 25.Qd1 Rxc1!

White resigns, for if 26.Qxc1 Rh3! Wins.

Chapter Six

Opening Mistakes Black Should Avoid

As we've pointed out earlier, an opening mistake on White's part may cost him the initiative; an opening mistake on Black's part may cost him the game. If Black plays well, White's advantage of the first move will be neutralized from the start; if Black plays badly, White's advantage will result in a quickly winning game.

The Dangers of Thoughtless Development

In the following game Black begins with inexact moves and soon finds himself in a hopeless position: Queen's Gambit

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nc6

A doubtful move, because Black needs to advance the c-pawn to free himself.

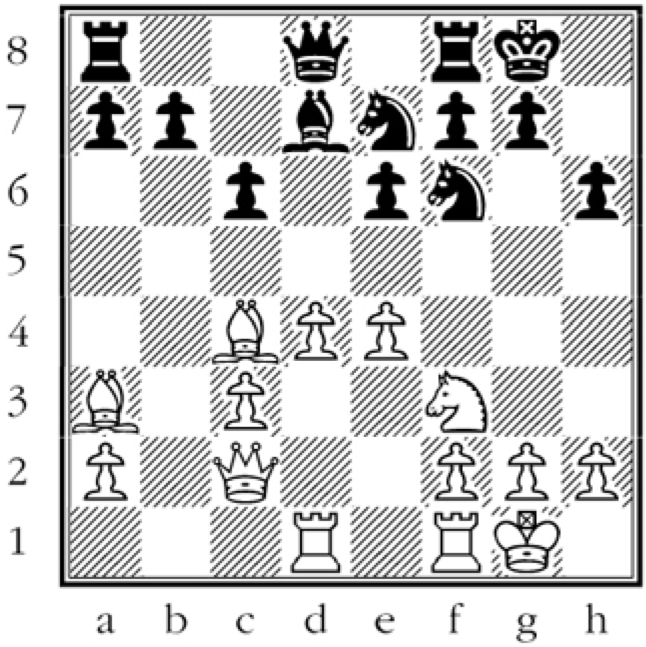
3.c4 e6?

Again he cramps his game voluntarily. 3…Bg4 is more promising.

4.Nc3 dxc4?

Now he surrenders the center. Eventually White will react powerfully with e2-e4.

5.e3 Nf6 6.Bxc4 Bb4 7.0-0 Bxc3? 8.bxc3 0-0 9.Qc2 Ne7 10.Ba3 c6 11.e4 h6? 12.Rad1 Bd7 (D)



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Black has played the opening very badly. Black's thoughtless development has left him in a hopeless position. Blocking his c-pawn on move 2, he is now unable to play the freeing move …c5.

Having hemmed in his light-square bishop on move 3, he has condemned this piece to lasting uselessness.

By surrendering the center on move 4, Black gave his opponent a chance to build up a mighty center.

The exchange on move 7 created a magnificent diagonal for White's dark-square bishop.

On move 11 Black weakened his kingside, making it easier for White to conduct an attack against the black king.

The Dangers of Ignoring the Center

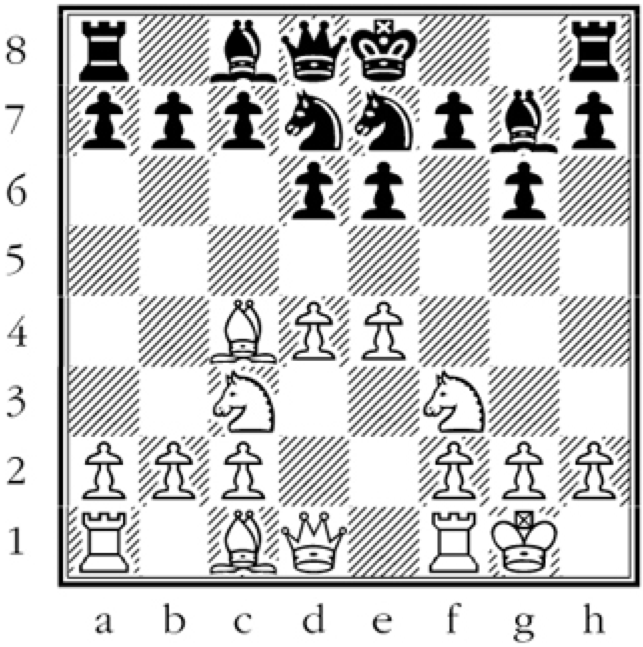
Having an adequate command of the center is a life-and-death matter for Black. What happens if he ignores the center is well illustrated in the following opening: Modern Defense

White – Black

1.d4 g6? 2.e4 Bg7

Black's fianchetto of his dark-square bishop is premature. His poor timing has allowed White an overwhelming pawn center.

3.Nc3 d6 4.Nf3 Nd7? 5.Bc4 e6? 6.0-0 Ne7? (D)



70

The black pieces have no striking power.

Any expert would dismiss Black’s position as lost.

White has complete control of the center, while Black has neither center pawn on the fourth rank.

White’s knights are developed aggressively on the third rank; Black’s knights go timidly to the second rank.

Black’s fianchettoed bishop accomplishes nothing, while his other bishop is already destined to be a “problem child.” White’s bishops, on the other hand, will have bold, free diagonals.

The Dangers of a Planless Opening

Sometimes Black’s positional blunders are not so gross, and therefore perhaps not so easily recognizable; yet the results are equally disastrous. In the following example, Black’s hit-or-miss development ruins his prospects.

Owen’s Defense

White – Black

1.e4 b6? 2.d4 Bb7

Black has made the same kind of mistake as in the previous example.

3.Bd3 e6 4.Nh3

Usually it is not good to develop a knight away from the center. Here the move is good because it prepares for the line-opening advance of White’s f-pawn.

4…d5 5.e5!

Black has belatedly advanced in the center, but White’s reply creates difficulties for Black: he can no longer play …Nf6.

5…Ne7 6.0-0 Ng6 7.f4! Be7 8.f5!

Black has had to develop his kingside pieces ineffectually, and his light-square bishop has no scope. His position offers no promise whatever, and he will soon be exposed to a violent attack by White’s well-placed forces. Since Black’s pieces are not very active, his chances of successful resistance are microscopic.

These three examples of poor play can therefore serve as horrible examples of what Black must avoid in the opening. He need not find the *ideal development of the very best moves.* But he does need moves that give him a fighting chance, a basis for planning, a hope that he will have something to say about how the game unfolds. If he can achieve these substantial goals, he can truly say that he knows how to play the black pieces.

Book Five

How to Win When You’re Ahead

Chapter One

Superior Force Should Win

The basic proposition of this book is that you can win when you’re ahead because, in chess, *superior force should win!* There may have been times in your own games when you have been ahead in material without being able to win. If that is the case, this book should help you greatly. Once you have *adequate* force, you must be able to win with it.

It is easy to see that when you’re a queen ahead, or a rook, or even a bishop or knight ahead, the win is easy. In master games, when a player loses a piece the end is a foregone conclusion and he generally resigns.

But suppose you’re “only” a pawn ahead? To win a pawn is much more common than to win a piece. And, as you will see, most master games are decided by an extra pawn.

Most games of amateurs could likewise be decided by the advantage of a pawn if – and this is a very big if – the ordinary chessplayer knew how to make use of his extra pawn.

That is what most of this book is about – how to make use of a pawn ahead. Here you will see how the pawn becomes increasingly important as we come to the endgame stage. In the opening, when there are a great many pieces on the board, an extra pawn may seem a trifling matter. But in the endgame, with perhaps only a king and pawn left against a king, the extra pawn looms very large indeed as it proceeds inexorably on its way to the queening square.

There, in a single sentence, you have the secret of the extra pawn’s power – its power to become a queen on reaching the eighth (or first) rank. In this book you will have many examples of the pawn’s power. By studying these examples you will learn to win many more games. You will learn to win when you’re ahead.

The Elements of Cheskmate

The most basic examples of the use of superior force are the elementary checkmates:

king and queen vs. king
king and rook vs. king
king and two bishops vs. king

king, bishop, and knight vs. king

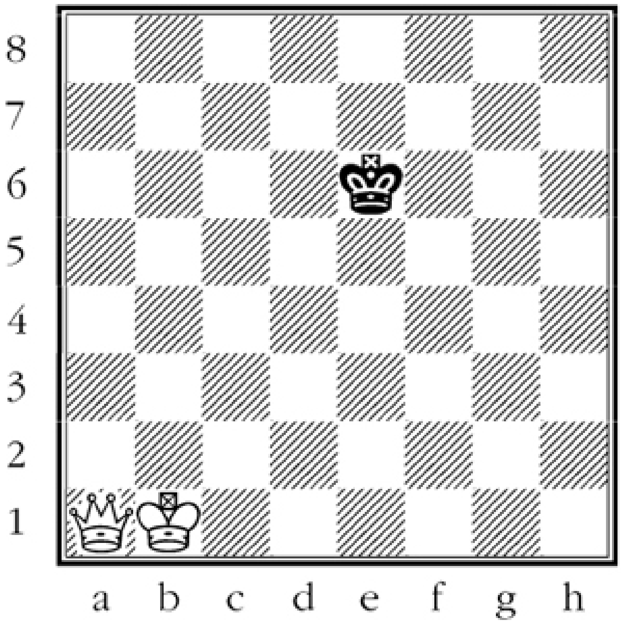
These checkmates are achieved on the open board. That is, no forces are present other than the units named.

Why are these checkmates important?

They represent the minimum force necessary for checkmate; but with such force it is possible to achieve checkmate no matter how the opponent plays. The player who is familiar with these checkmates can see that there is a purpose in chess. The player who is not familiar with these checkmates is necessarily at a loss in understanding how to bring a game to a satisfactory end.

Knowing these checkmates, then, is the first step toward playing decisive chess with a clear goal before you.

Checkmate with the Queen (D)

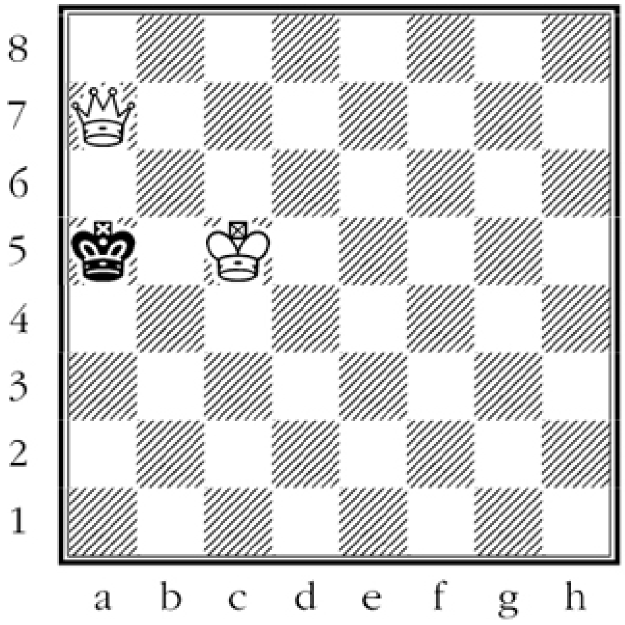


1

White to move

White brings his king towards the center, cuts down the mobility of Black’s king, and then drives him to the side of the board where the checkmate will take place.

1.Kc2 Kd5 2.Kd3 Kc5 3.Qf6 Kd5 4.Qe7 Kc6 5.Kc4 Kb6 6.Qd7 Ka6 7.Kc5 Ka5 8.Qa7# (D)



2

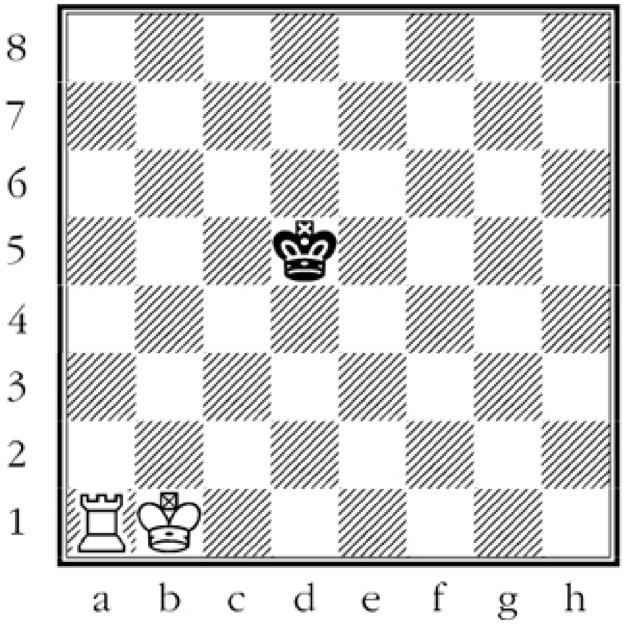
Black is checkmated.

Another standard checkmate position would have arisen if White had played 8.Qb5#.

Starting from Diagram 1, the black king had a great many alternative possibilities. However, the standard procedure, as outlined under Diagram 1, would have been exactly the same.

Checkmate with the Rook

Checkmate with the rook is not quite so easy. This stands to reason, as the queen has the combined powers of the rook and bishop. (D)



White to move

Again White brings his king to the center and then cuts down the black king’s mobility, forcing him to a side row.

1.Kb2 Kd4 2.Kc2 Ke4 3.Kc3 Ke5 4.Kc4 Ke4 5.Re1+! Kf5 6.Kd4 Kf4

Note what happened at move 4; when the kings face each other horizontally or vertically, a rook check greatly limits the king’s mobility.

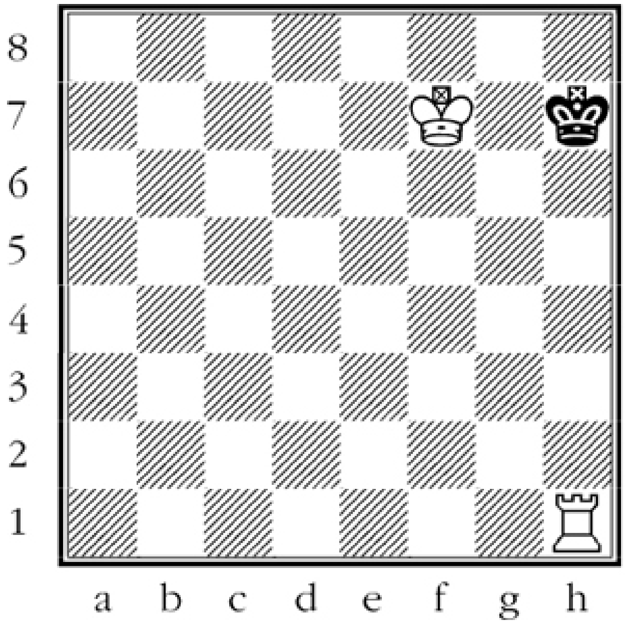
(White’s next move will repeat the maneuver.)

As a result, the black king is now limited to three files.

7.Rf1+! Kg5 8.Ke4 Kg6 9.Ke5 Kg5 10.Rg1+! Kh5

Now Black’s king is marooned at the side of the board. The end is neigh.

11.Kf4 Kh6 12.Kf5 Kh7 13.Kf6 Kh8 14.Kf7 Kh7 15.Rh1# (D)


4

Black is checkmated.

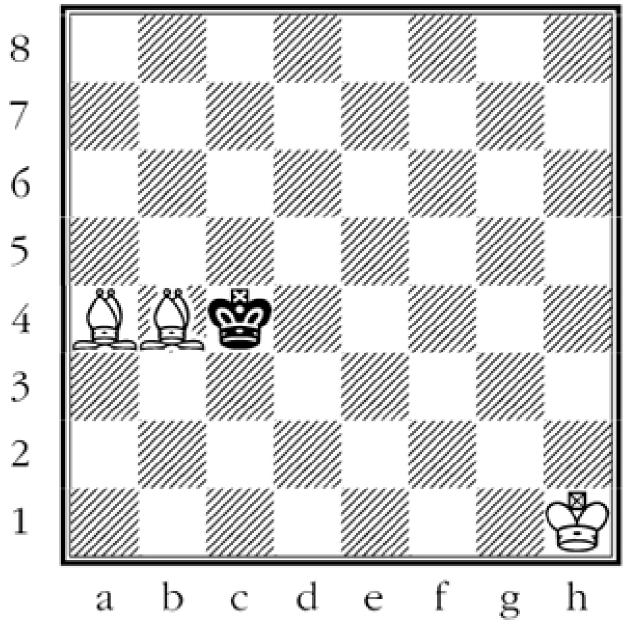
This rook checkmate ended with the same type of position as the queen checkmate in Diagram 2. There is one important difference, however: the extra power of the queen gives it an alternative checkmate position. This is not true in the case of the rook.

Checkmate with the Two Bishops

Just as the rook is weaker than the queen, the bishop or knight is weaker than the rook.

A single bishop or a single knight cannot enforce checkmate. In fact, even two knights cannot enforce checkmate.

Two bishops, however, can force checkmate. The process, though a bit lengthy, is fascinating because it gives us a glimpse of the power of the two bishops on the open board. (D)

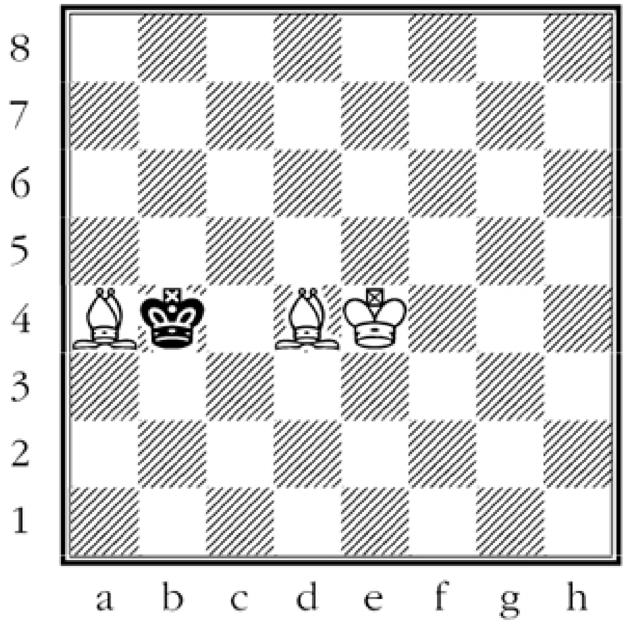


5

White to move

Unlike the queen or the rook, the two bishops can give checkmate only on one of the four corner squares. The black king is well situated here for a prolonged resistance.

1.Be1 Kd3 2.Kg2 Ke2 3.Bf2 Kd3 4.Kf3 Kc3 5.Ke4 Kc4 6.Bd4 Kb4 (D)

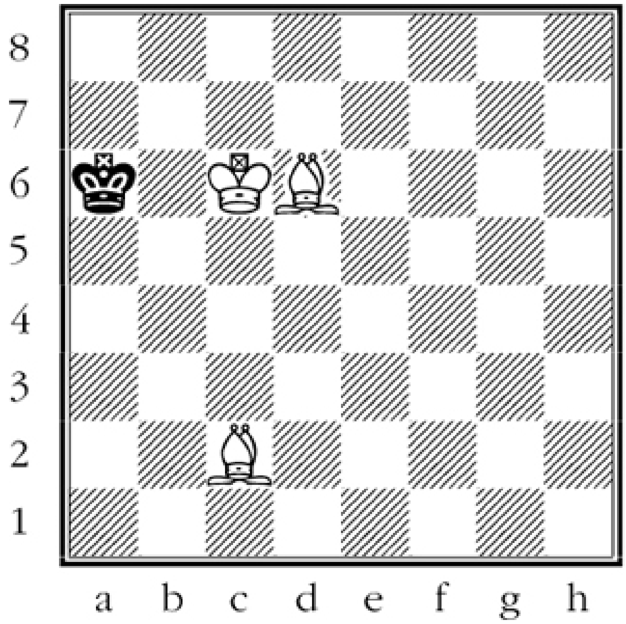


6

White to move

White has brought his king into action, and his next job is to drive the black king to a side row. The process is slow but sure.

7.Bd1 Kc4 8.Bc2 Kb4 9.Kd5 Kb5 10.Bc5 Ka6 11.Kc6 Ka5 12.Bd6 Ka6 D)

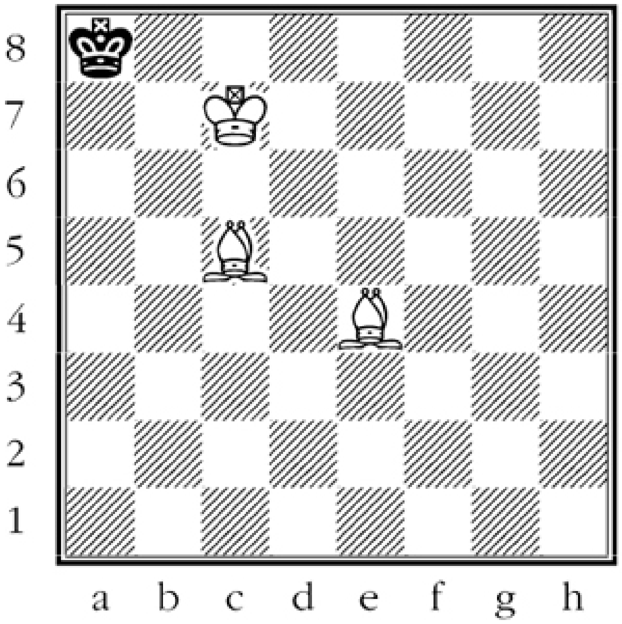


7

White to move

White has driven the black king to the side. Note how powerfully the bishops cooperate. The final phase is to drive the black king to a8, where he will be checkmated.

13.Bb4 Ka7 14.Kc7 Ka6 15.Bd3+ Ka7 16.Bc5+ Ka8 17.Be4# (D)



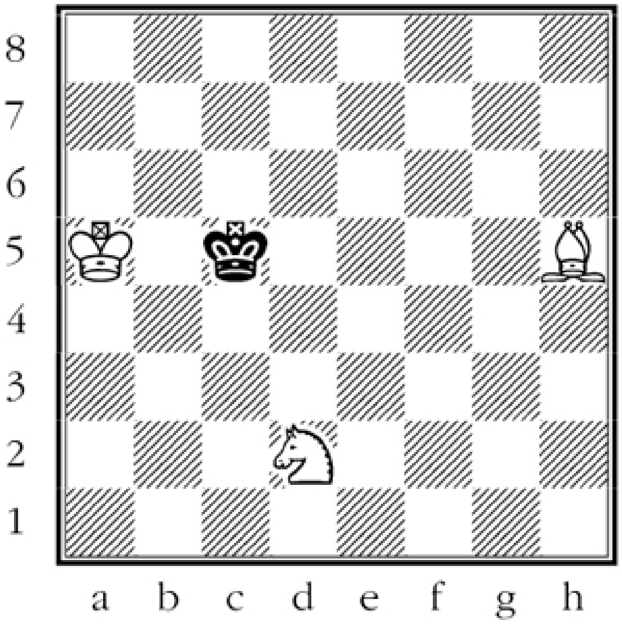
8

Black is checkmated.

White brought his king to the center, drove Black’s king to the side, and was then ready for the kill. His smoothly cooperating bishops finally checkmated the black king on a corner square.

Checkmate with the Bishop and Knight

This mate is really difficult, and even experienced players have been embarrassed by the requirement of forcing the checkmate in 50 moves. (D)

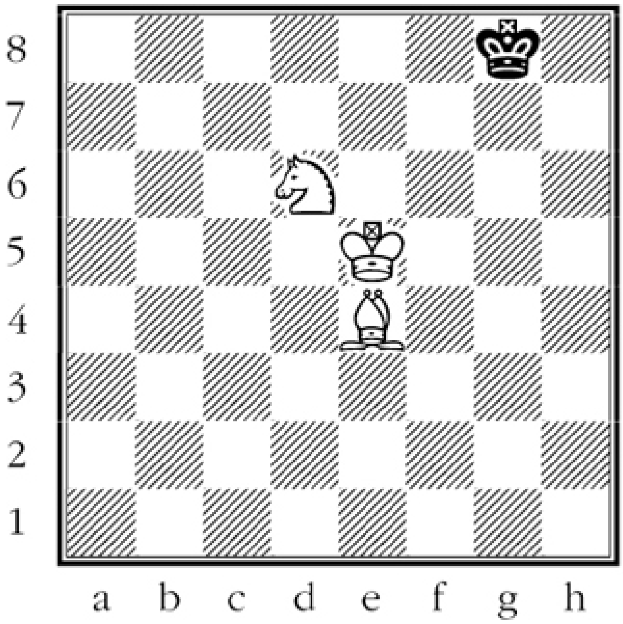


9

White to move

To bring about this checkmate requires the highest degree of cooperation of the checkmating forces. The mate can only take place on a corner square of the same color as those on which the bishop travels.

1.Nb3+ Kc6 2.Kb4 Kd5 3.Bf3+ Kd6 4.Nd4 Ke5 5.Kc4 Kf6 6.Kd5 Kf7 7.Nf5 Kf6 8.Nd6 Kg6 9.Ke5 Kg7 10.Be4 Kg8 (D)

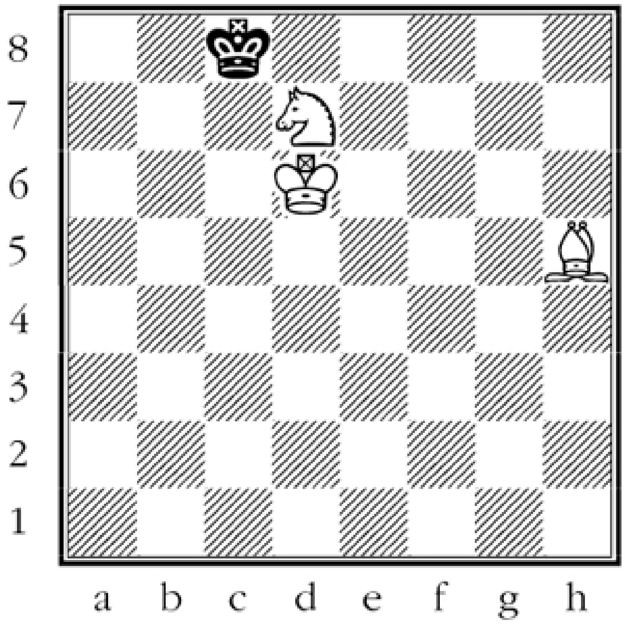


10

White to move

The hard-working white pieces have at last driven the black king to the side. Next comes the task of forcing him to a light corner square – a8. This requires patience!

11.Kf6 Kh8 12.Nf7+ Kg8 13.Bf5 Kf8 14.Bh7 Ke8 15.Ne5 Kf8 16.Nd7+ Ke8 17.Ke6 Kd8 18.Kd6 Ke8 19.Bg6+! Kd8 20.Bh5 Kc8 (D)

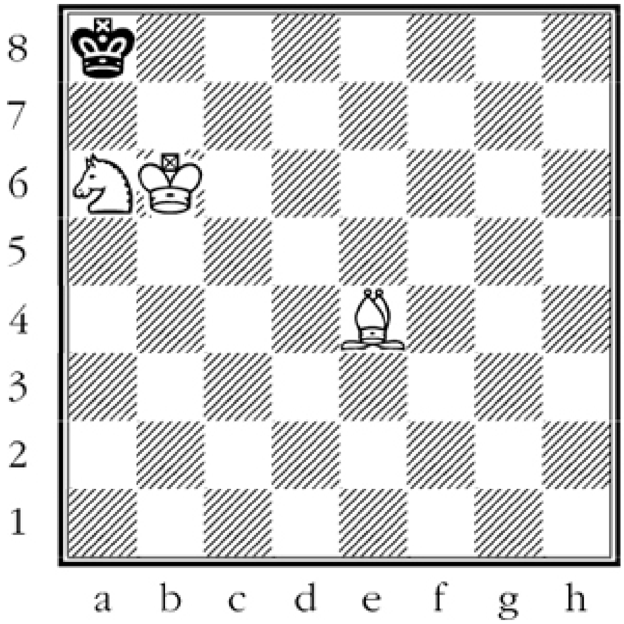


11

White to move

White has accomplished the hardest part of his task. Yet, though the black king is only two squares away from the corner, it will still take nine moves to finish the job.

21.Nc5 Kd8 22.Nb7+ Kc8 23.Kc6 Kb8 24.Kb6 Kc8 25.Bg4+ Kb8 26.Bf5 Ka8 27.Nc5 Kb8 28.Na6+ Ka8 29.Be4# (D)



12

Black is checkmated.

One of the best ways to get an insight into the powers of the pieces is to practice these checkmates alone or with a friend.

Why Superior Force Should Win

From these basic checkmates we learn, then, that there are certain material advantages which enable us to force checkmate.

However, an advantage in material has many other uses. Nor do we have to wait to remove all the pieces from the board in order to win the game.

For example: you have seen how to check-mate a lone king with your king and queen. Now, suppose you have White in a game which starts like this: Petroff’s Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nxe5 Nxe4? 4.Qe2! Nf6?? 5.Nc6+! Be7 6.Nxd8 Kxd8

You have won Black’s queen, and given up a mere knight in return.

How will the game proceed from this point? The superior power of the queen is bound to tell in your favor. Think of all the long-range swoops the queen is famous for; all the double attacks; all the divergent checks.

Clearly you will be able to make all sorts of attacks that Black, *with his disadvantage in material,* won’t be able to meet adequately. After all, there will be more power in your attacks than he can muster for defense.

In short: your initial material advantage will lead to greater material advantage.

You can also make use of your material advantage in another way. The more you swap down, the nearer you bring Black to that dreaded endgame stage where he cannot hope to escape checkmate. So, sometimes when you threaten to exchange, he will evade the transaction even if it costs him some material.

Of course, he may not be content to let you whittle down his forces more and more. Realizing the hopelessness and dreariness of his situation, he may resign – conceding that “superior force should win.”

Now let’s suppose you win a rook early in the game. Here again, by threat of exchange or by overwhelming force, your material advantage will help you to win.

Suppose you win a bishop or a knight?

The picture is still the same, despite the fact that neither of these pieces can force checkmate. In the earlier part of the game they can exert their superior force for many purposes, such as winning pawns.

Winning pawns? Surely that means very little. Most players lose pawns without a qualm. And of course it’s absurd to think of a pawn forcing checkmate. Yet this attitude of contempt, widespread though it is, is based on a serious fallacy. Because the pawn has the potential power of becoming a queen through promotion at the eighth (first) rank, the pawn is actually of great value.

Among masters, the advantage of a pawn habitually decides the fate of a game – *of championship tournament and title matches.* To take one example, the great 34-game struggle between Alekhine and Capablanca in 1927 made Alekhine world champion when he scored the decisive win through the advantage of a “mere” pawn!

The same advantage would also be decisive in the games of lesser players, if only they knew how to make use of it. It is the purpose of this volume to deal with this vitally practical problem. By learning how to win when you’re ahead, you will greatly increase the number of your victories.

Before we turn to some of the important features of utilizing a material advantage, we need to be very clear about the value of each piece in relation to the others.

The Relative Value of the Pieces

Queen	9 points
Rook	5 points
Bishop	3 points
Knight	3 points
Pawn	1 point

For most readers this table of values will be in the nature of review, but let’s dwell briefly on what it tells us.

The queen is by far the strongest of the forces, not to be parted with unless you obtain heavy compensation.

Two rooks, worth ten points, are somewhat stronger than a lone queen.

Bishop and knight, know as “minor pieces,” are each valued at 3 points. You may therefore readily exchange a bishop for a knight or a knight for a bishop.

A rook is definitely worth more than a minor piece (5 points vs. 3 points).

A rook is worth more than a minor piece plus a pawn (4 points).

Two minor pieces (6 points) are worth more than a rook (5 points).

To play chess well, it is absolutely essential to have a thorough grasp of the relative values of the forces.

Without this knowledge, you cannot even know whether you are ahead or behind in material. You are also at a loss, without this knowledge, when it comes to exchanging pieces. A player who does not know the values of the pieces has no way of knowing whether an exchange is desirable or not.

Again, a player who lacks this knowledge is greatly limited in his use of threats. To be able to threaten your opponent's forces, you need an exact notion of what you propose to capture and what you may be called upon to give up.

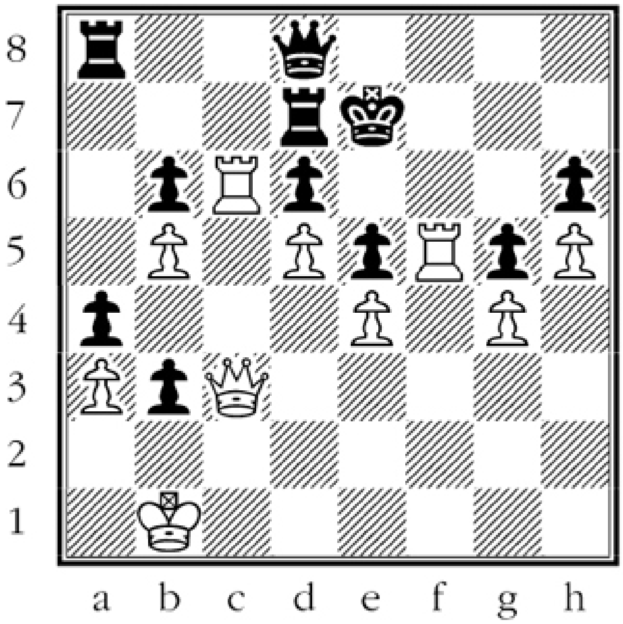
We have said that superior force should win, by and large. It should win most of the time, or generally. There are important reasons for using these limited phrases so repetitiously.

The painful fact is that superior force does not *always* win. Why?

In the first place, there are certain rare theoretical positions – stalemate situations, for example – in which superior force does not win. As a rule, however, the player who has his wits about him can avoid such disappointments.

A second exception to the rule that superior force should win lies in the possibility of sacrifices. These are brilliant moves that give up material purposely, with a view to obtaining adequate, or more than adequate, compensation.

Take the following position as an example: (D)



13

White to move

White plays 1.Qxe5+!!, a beautiful move that forces 1…dxe5. White has either sacrificed or blundered – which is it? The answer: 2.Re6#! It was a sacrifice!

Diagram 13 is a fine example of a sacrifice. Ordinarily, when a player *loses* his queen for a pawn, we say the move is idiotic. When a player *gives up* his queen for a pawn – and knows what he is doing – we say he is inspired.

If you think about it carefully, you will see that sacrifices are not really an exception to the rule that superior force should win. Sacrifices aim at achieving (a) checkmate or (b) superiority in material. So, although they often shock us, there is indeed method in their seeming madness.

The third exception to the rule that superior force should win is a very sad one. A player with a material advantage *ought* to win. But if he blunders away his advantage, or doesn't know how to make use of it, or lets his opponent slip out of his difficulties, he may very well end up by not winning.

Later on we will pay some attention to the exceptions, just by way of precaution.

But first, let's study the techniques for *winning with superior force.*

Chapter Two

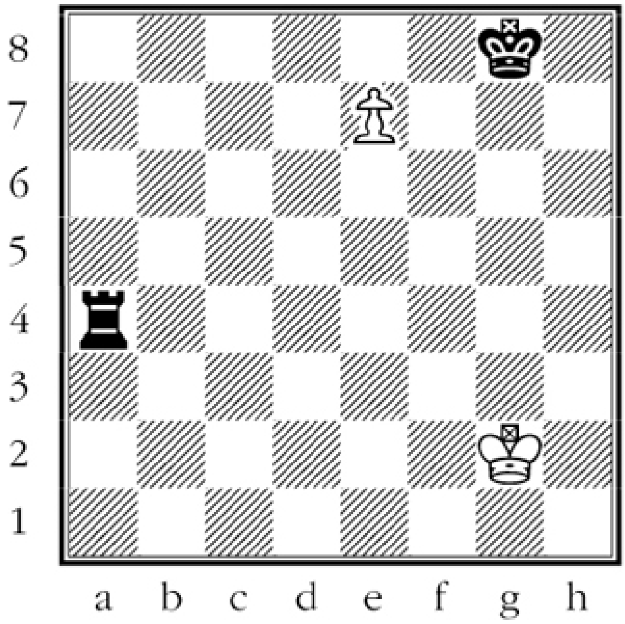
The Power of Pawn Promotion

Have you ever stopped to think that the strongest move on the chessboard – aside from actual checkmate – is the successful queening of a pawn?

To obtain a new queen so cheaply is the equivalent of winning your opponent's queen!

If we think of pawn promotion in this way, we can understand why the advantage of a pawn plays such a big role in the games of the masters, and why it should play just as important a part in our own games.

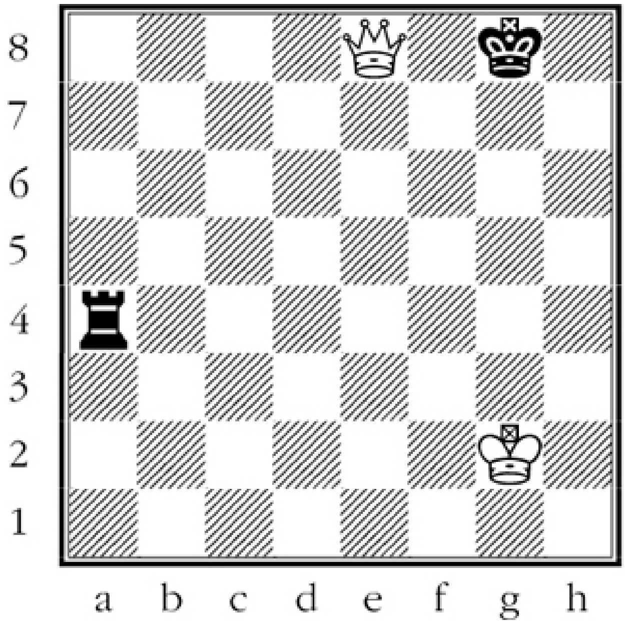
In the two following diagrams we see how pawn promotion "makes all the difference": (D)



14

White to move

At this moment White is "hopelessly" behind in material. Without the possibility of queening, he could safely resign. However, he plays 1.e8Q+. (D)



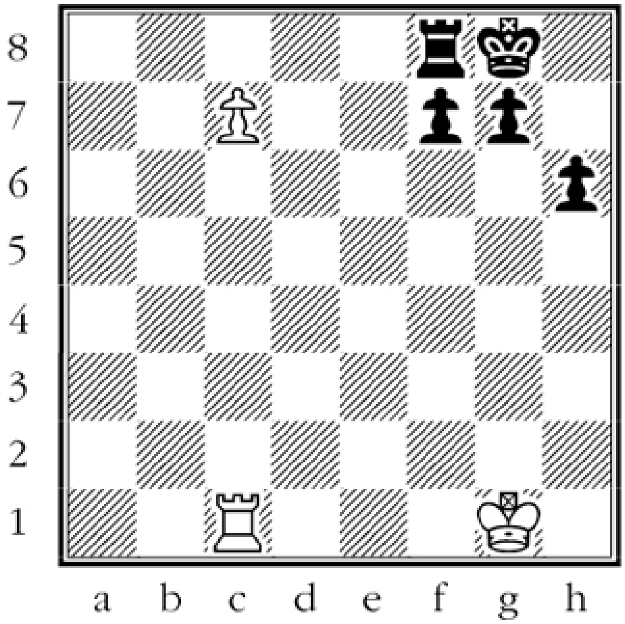
15

Black to move

Black is in check from the new queen. He must move his king out of check. When he does so, White remorselessly continues 2.Qxa4, followed by checkmate.

Sometimes, it is true, the newly established queen is immediately captured. But if there is a recapturing force at hand, the pawn promotion still turns out to be highly profitable.

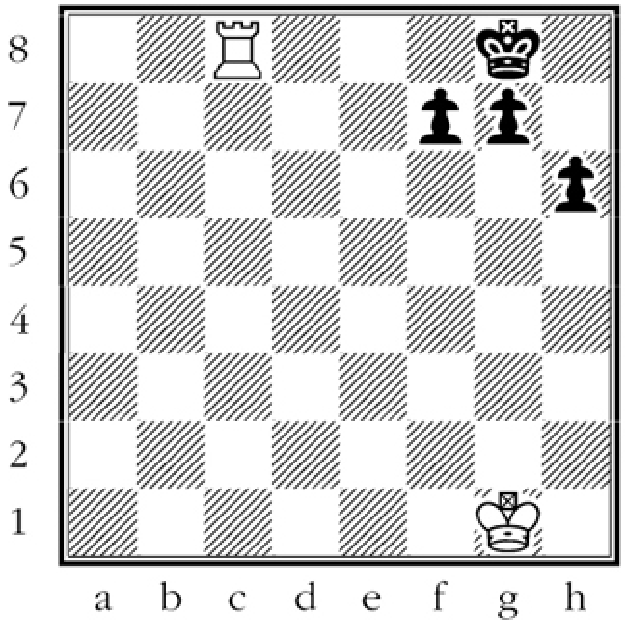
An example of material gain by pawn promotion: (D)



16

White to move

White plays 1.c8Q. As Black cannot afford to remain a queen down, he plays 1…Rxc8. White of course replies 2.Rxc8+ (D)

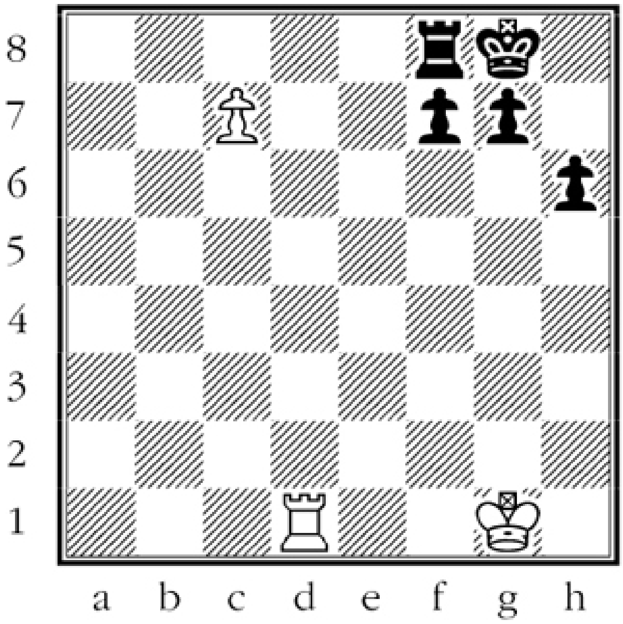


17

Black to move

Black has been able to get rid of the new queen, but he has had to part with his rook in the process. White has won a rook!

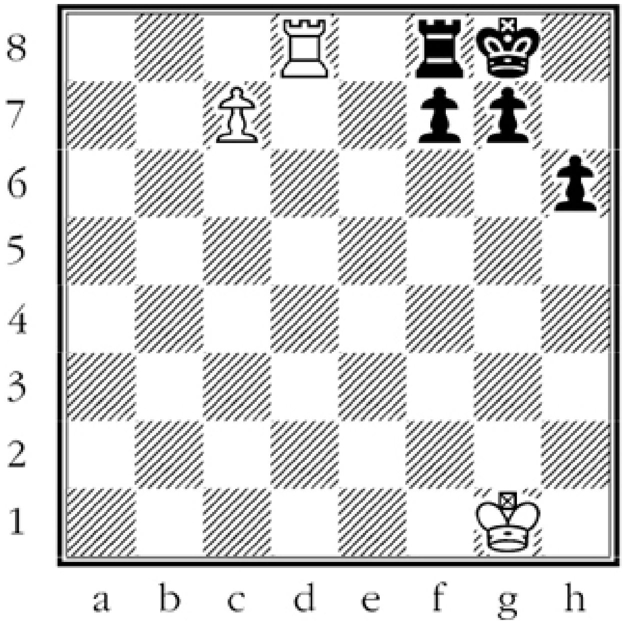
The promotion of a pawn is generally of decisive effect. Note, for example, how the newly created queen took an active role in the position of Diagram 15. Diagrams 18 and 19 illustrate the same point. (D)



18

White to move

White plays 1.Rd8. This is a very common maneuver with a pawn that is already on the seventh (second) rank, and you will find it very effective. The advanced white rook blocks off Black’s forces from the white pawn. (D)



19

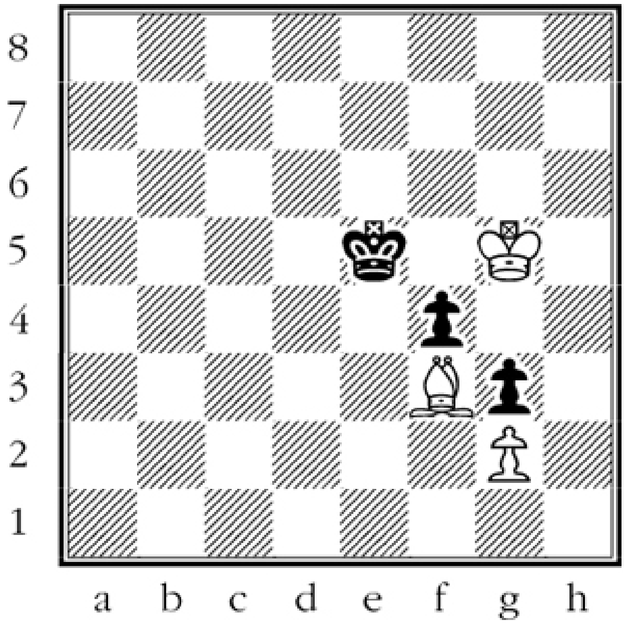
Black to move

Black can resign. If he takes the white rook, the passed pawn recaptures, becoming a queen. If Black refrains from capturing, the pawn advances anyway, becomes a queen, and is safe from recapture.

The All-important Pawn

We saw earlier that a bishop or a knight cannot force checkmate. If you are left with king and knight (or king and bishop) against a lone king, you cannot win.

But if the bishop or knight is assisted by only a single pawn, then that pawn, supported by the other forces, advances to the queening square. (D)



20

White to move

Without the lone white pawn this position would be a draw. As matters stand, there follows 1.Kg4 Kd4 2.Kxf4 and then 3.Kxg3. The white pawn will then advance to the eighth rank and become a queen.

The examples in this chapter have shown the tremendous power of pawn promotion. However, we must not jump to the conclusion that pawn promotion is easy to carry out or that it is appropriate in all parts of the game.

Pawn promotion is very rare in the opening, as it takes quite a few moves for a pawn to reach the eighth (or first) rank. And, since there are a great many pieces on the board during the opening stage, the chances of the pawn’s reaching the last rank are slim indeed.

In the middlegame the pawn’s promotion chances are somewhat brighter, but here too the game is complicated by various factors, such as attacking play against the king.

It is in the endgame stage, when the queens have generally disappeared and when relatively few pieces are left on the board, that pawn promotion begins to take the center of the stage.

It is in these rather simplified endgame positions, too, that the kings can at last venture out to the center of the board, no longer terrified by the brutal attacking possibilities of the major pieces.

The new mobility of the kings at this simplified stage reminds us that endings with only the kings and pawns on the board are the simplest kind of endings and therefore the logical ones to study first. So we now turn to them.

Chapter Three

King and Pawn Endings

In one sense, king and pawn endings are very simple.

The only material on the board has been greatly simplified. Only kings and pawns remain. Everything else has been swapped off.

However, king and pawn endgames abound in interesting finesses. In that sense, they are far from simple.

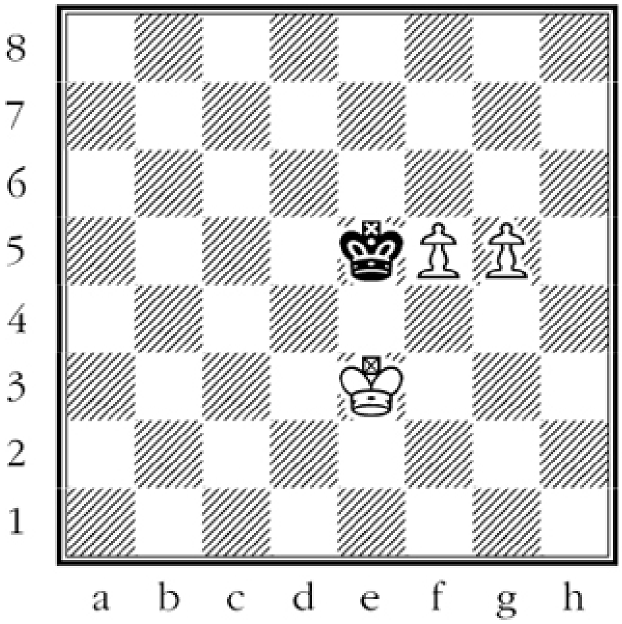
We need to be familiar with king and pawn endings because some of them, as you will soon see, are of a standard form that is always a win.

This means that whenever you can manage to win a pawn free and clear, you are in effect threatening to swap off all the pieces, reducing the game to a standard king and pawn ending that is an almost automatic win for you! The threat of this simplification is a potent weapon in your handling of the game.

Passed Pawns

Most king and pawn play revolves about passed pawns – their creation and their advance to the queening square. (A passed pawn is one that is not impeded by hostile pawns on either of the neighboring files. In Diagrams 21 and 22, White has two passed pawns.) Some passed pawns are especially powerful. We can see this in Diagrams 21 and 22.

Connected Passed Pawns (D)



21

White to move

White's passed pawns are connected: they are placed on neighboring files. They are capable of protecting each other without their king's help.

Here is a typical line of play which wins for White in Diagram 21:

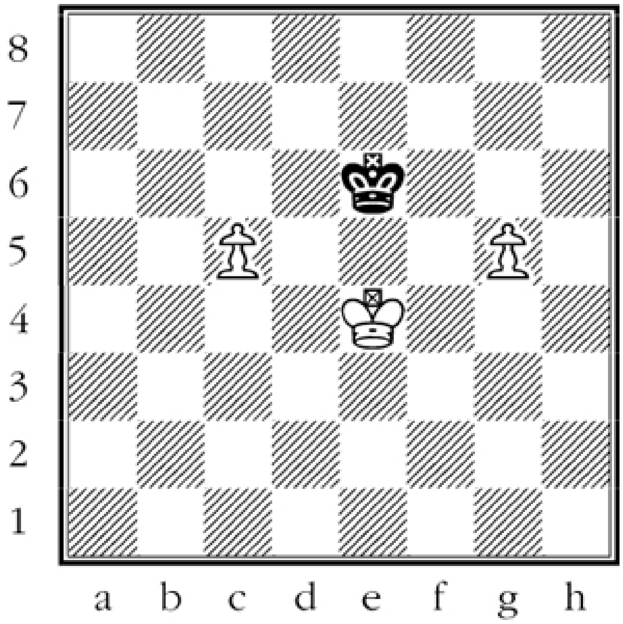
1.g6 Kf6

If 1…Kxf5 2.g7 and the pawn cannot be prevented from queening.

2.Kf4 Ke7 3.Ke5 Kf8 4.f6 Kg8 5.f7+ Kf8 6.Ke6 Kg7 7.Ke7

White guards the queening square, so that he can now continue with 8.f8Q(+) with a quick mate in the offing.

Remote Passed Pawns (D)



22

White to move

Here White's pawns are said to be "remote passed pawns" or "distant passed pawns." We use this term because they are too far away from the black king to be caught by him as they advance to queen.

In Diagram 22 White's remote passed pawns are so powerful that White can queen a pawn without the help of his king. This is how he does it: **1.g6**

(White can also start the same process with 1.c6.)

1…Kf6

For the moment the black king can still catch either pawn in time.

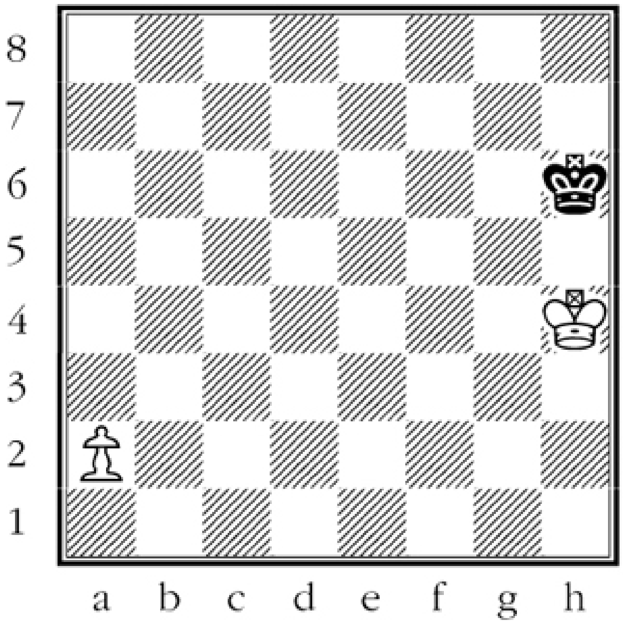
2.c6 Ke6

Else the c-pawn marches through to promotion.

3.c7 Kd7 4.g7

Now it is too late for the black king to catch the g-pawn, which will become a queen on the next move.

White's remote passed pawn wins for him without the aid of his king. (D)



23

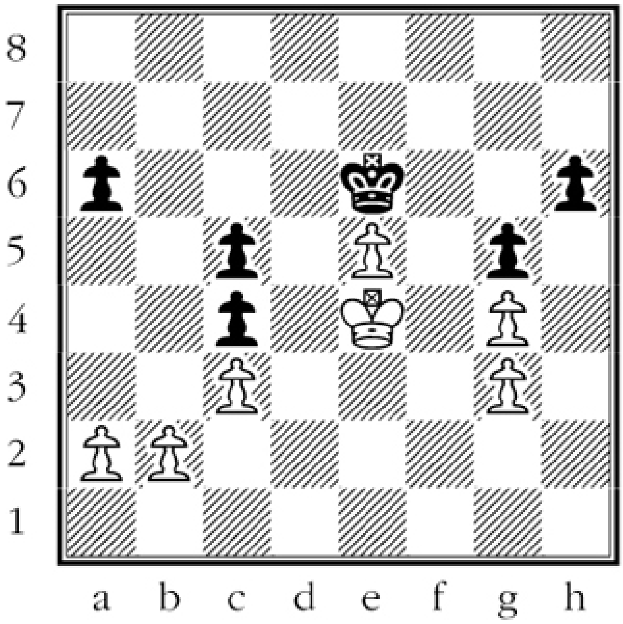
White to move

In Diagram 23 the play is:

1.a4! Kg7 2.a5 Kf7 3.a6 Ke7 4.a7 Kd7

And now White plays 5.a8Q and will soon force checkmate. Thus we see from these examples the enormous power of the remote passed pawn.

Now we come to a basic concept in chess known as the “opposition.” (D)



24

White to move

The kings are in “opposition.” We use this term when they face each other with an odd number of squares between them. The king that does NOT have to move is said to “have the opposition.”

Before we see what happens in Diagram 24, please study the above paragraph carefully. In the basic king and pawn endings, which we are now about to study, the winning process often depends on “having the opposition.”

To make our study of Diagram 24 easier, let’s assume for the moment that it’s Black’s turn to move: He plays 1…a5 and White replies 2.a4!.

Now Black’s pawn moves are exhausted, and he has to move his king. That means that White has the opposition – Black’s king has to give way.

Why is this important to us?

Well, White is a pawn ahead to begin with. He has a passed e-pawn which is momentarily blocked. If a free path is created for this passed pawn, White can advance it, supported by his king, to the queening square.

Not only that; if Black’s king gives way, White can advance his own king to d5, capturing both weak c-pawns. Here is what happens: **1…Ke7 2.Kd5! Kd7 3.Kxc5 Ke6 4.Kd4!**

Now Black must move his king away from the e-pawn, allowing White to play 5.Kxc4. Then White is three pawns up, and he has a new passed pawn – the c-pawn. By advancing both of his passed pawns, supported by his king, White must promote to a queen, leading up to a quick checkmate.

So far all this is clear and convincing, but remember we said in the caption to Diagram 24 that *White moves first.* Given that condition, White must be on the alert. For example, suppose he starts from Diagram like this: **1.a4?? a5!**

Now White has botched it. He has no pawn moves, and must move his king. In other words, BLACK HAS THE OPPOSITION!

The consequence? After White moves his king, he loses his e-pawn, and the position is a draw!

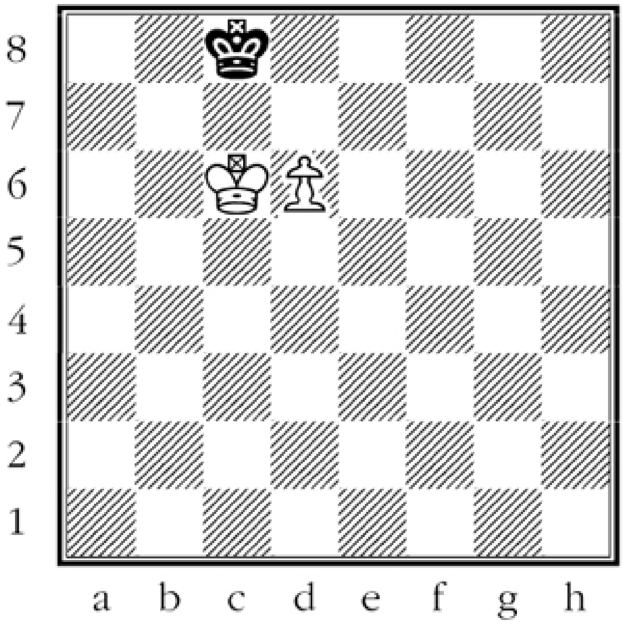
Now back to Diagram 24. White *can* win, and this is how:

1.a3!! a5 2.a4!!

Note the finesse of making two moves with the a-pawn instead of one. Now it is White who after all has the opposition; Black’s king must give way. White plays 3.Kd5, as shown above, and continues on his way to victory.

That was what we meant when we said that the simple king and pawn endings are not always “simple.” However, their tricky qualities add to their fascination.

Who Moves? (D)



25

If Black moves, White wins. If White moves, the position is a draw. In other words: if White has the opposition, he wins. If Black has the opposition, he draws.

Diagram 25 is one of the most important situations in basic king and pawn endings.

If Black moves, here is what happens:

1…Kd8 2.d7 Ke7 3.Kc7

And on the next move White plays 4.d8Q(+), checkmating quickly.

If White moves first, he cannot win:

1.d7+ Kd8

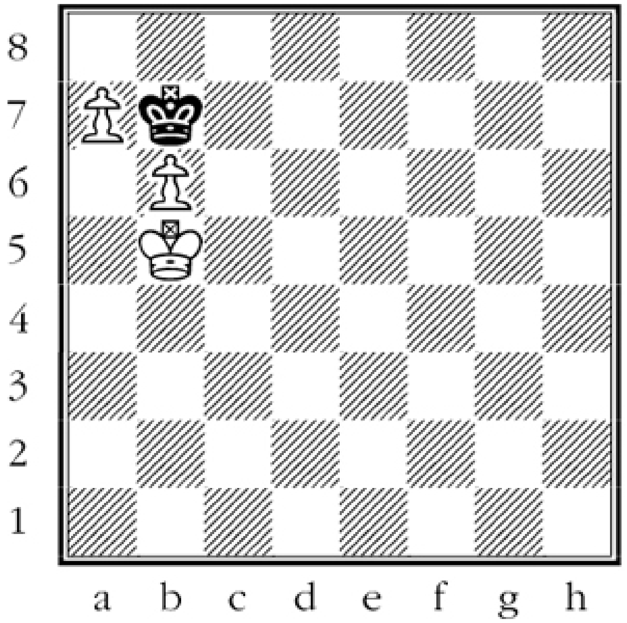
Now the only move to hold the pawn is 2.Kd6, but that causes stalemate!

Suppose White tries a different way:

1.Kb6 Kd7 2.Kc5 Kd8! 3.Kc6 Kc8

Black has maneuvered his king to keep the opposition. He thus maintains the draw.

The important moral is, then, that in the basic ending of king and pawn vs. king, *you must make sure that you keep the opposition.* The method will be explained in later endings. (D)



26

White to move

Here too White has stalemate troubles. Thus, if 1.Kc5 Ka8 2.Kc6 and Black is stalemated. How is White to win?

In Diagram 26 White has more material than he needs for winning purposes. Here is how he solves his difficulty, getting rid of the stalemate: **1.a8Q+! Kxa8 2.Ka6!**

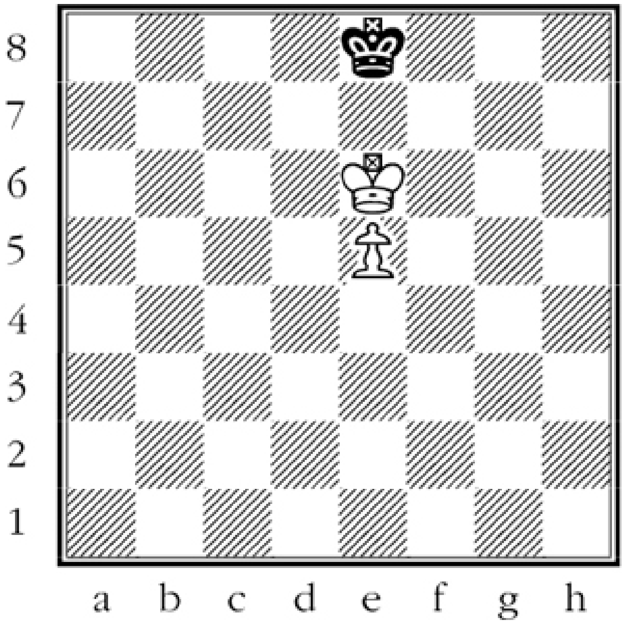
The point. White has the opposition. Black's king must give way.

2…Kb8 3.b7

Here is a valuable hint about positions where the stronger side's king does not control the queening square: whenever your pawn advances to the seventh (second) rank *without giving check*, you win the ending.

Black must now play 3…Kc7, whereupon White continues 4.Ka7, making 5.b8Q(+) possible, followed by a quick mate.

Who Moves First? (D)



27

It doesn’t matter! Because White’s pawn is still on the fifth rank, he can always advance the pawn at any point where he has lost the opposition. This will cause Back to give way with his king.

Suppose, in Diagram 27, that Black moves first. Then he has lost the opposition, and his king must give way: **1…Kd8**

Or 1…Kf8 2.Kd7 with the same result.

2.Kf7 Kd7 3.e6+ Kd8

Now White continues 4.e7+ followed by 5.d8Q(+), followed by a quick checkmate. Now back to Diagram 27. Suppose White moves first. What follows is extremely important, and you must study it until you fully understand it.

White must move his king, and therefore loses the opposition:

1.Kd6

(Note that 1.Kf6 serves the same purpose.)

1…Kd8

Black maintains the opposition. So far so good for Black. But now White has a move in reserve:

2.e6!

(In Diagram 25 White’s pawn was already on the sixth rank, so he no longer had this “tempo” in reserve!) **2…Ke8**

Black’s king must give way. He has lost the opposition.

3.e7

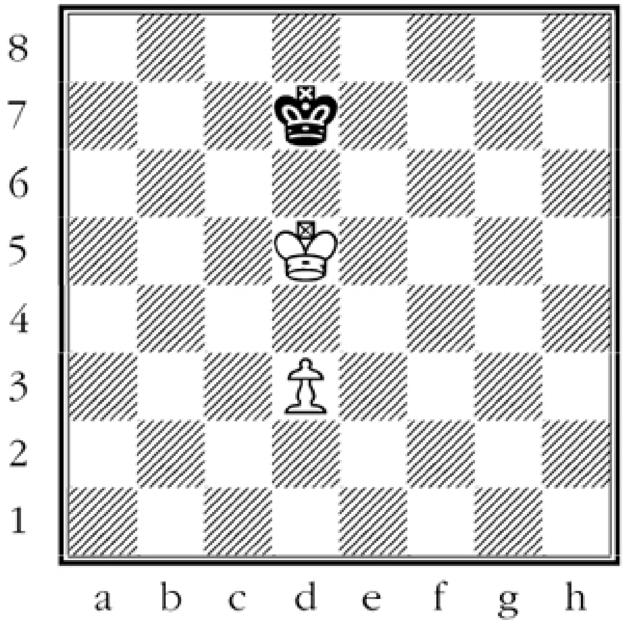
The pawn has advanced to the seventh rank *without check.*

As we know from earlier examples, this means that White’s pawn will soon become a queen and enforce checkmate.

An important moral we deduce from Diagram 27 is this: if your single pawn has not reached the sixth (third for Black) rank, don’t advance it too hastily. Reserve the moves of the pawn to a time when you will be badly in need of them.

Now let’s apply what we’ve learned.

Who Moves First? (D)



28

It doesn’t matter. If Black moves first, he loses the opposition immediately, and White wins with ease. If White moves first, he keeps the opposition with 1.d4!.

Diagram 28 should offer no difficulties.

If Black moves first, White quickly lays down a path for his pawn to advance and queen. For example: **1…Ke7 2.Kc6! Kd8 3.Kd6 Kc8 4.d4 Kd8 5.d5**

Again Black loses the opposition: 5…Ke8 6.Kc7 etc. or 5…Kc8 6.Ke7 etc. and White’s king guards the queening square.

If White moves first in Diagram 28, the procedure is pretty much the same:

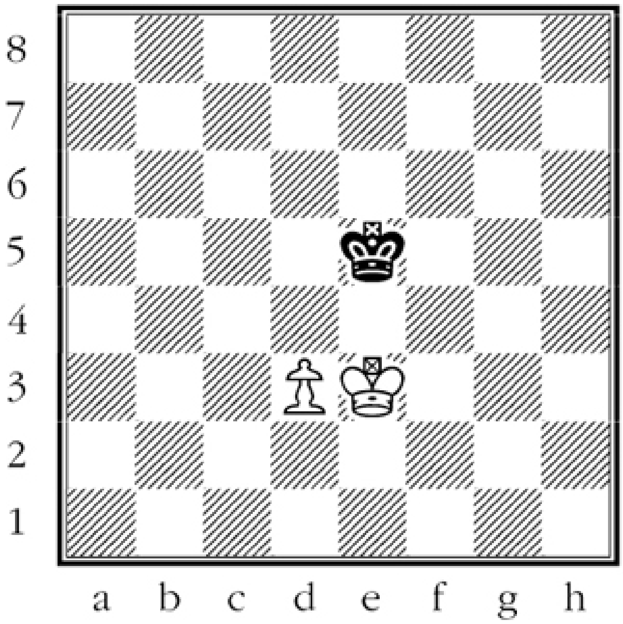
1.d4! Ke7 2.Kc6 Kd8 3.Kd6 Ke8 4.Kc7 Ke7 5.d5 Ke8 6.d6 Kf8 7.d7

Again the pawn becomes a queen and forces checkmate.

There is still one more vital point we need to know about king and pawn endings.

In Diagram 28 White’s king was ideally posted – *in front of the pawn.* However, if the stronger side’s king is at the side of the pawn, or in back of it, and if the weaker side’s king is well advanced, the lone king can draw.

Black Draws! (D)



29

Black is able to draw because, due to the unfavorable position of the white king, Black can always assume the opposition at the critical moment.

Diagram 29 is a draw no matter who moves first.

Let’s see the play with Black moving first. He loses the opposition at once, but he regains it when he needs it. This will lead in due course to the drawing method of Diagram 25.

1…Kd5 2.d4 Kd6!

After 2…Kc4?? 3.Ke4! White wins because Black can never get back the opposition. If 3…Kb5 4.Kd5!.

3.Ke4 Ke6! 4.d5+ Kd6 5.Kd4 Kd7 6.Ke5 Ke7!

If 6…Kc7?? 7.Ke6 and White gets the opposition after 7…Kd8 8.Kd6. Then if 8…Ke8 9.Kc7 wins; or 8…Kc8 9.Ke7 wins in familiar fashion.

7.d6+ Kd7 8.Kd5

A crucial situation for Black If 8…Kc8?? 9.Kc6 White gains the opposition and wins. The same thing happens after 8…Ke8?? 9.Ke6. But Black does have a saving move: **8…Kd8!! 9.Kc6**

Or 9.Ke6 Ke8 with a similar windup.

9…Kc8!

Now we have the exact position of Diagram 25 with Black having the opposition and White having to move. As we know from Diagram 25, this is a drawn position.

From our study of the positions in this chapter, you now know which positions to aim for when a king and pawn ending is in prospect, and which positions to avoid.

You have learned of the importance of the opposition, and you have seen how you can use it to your advantage by keeping pawn moves in reserve.

These positions are well worth playing over, preferably with a friend, so that you can iron out any misunderstandings. You will find that familiarity with these endings is very profitable in terms of additional wins you will score.

Chapter Four

Endgames with a Piece Ahead

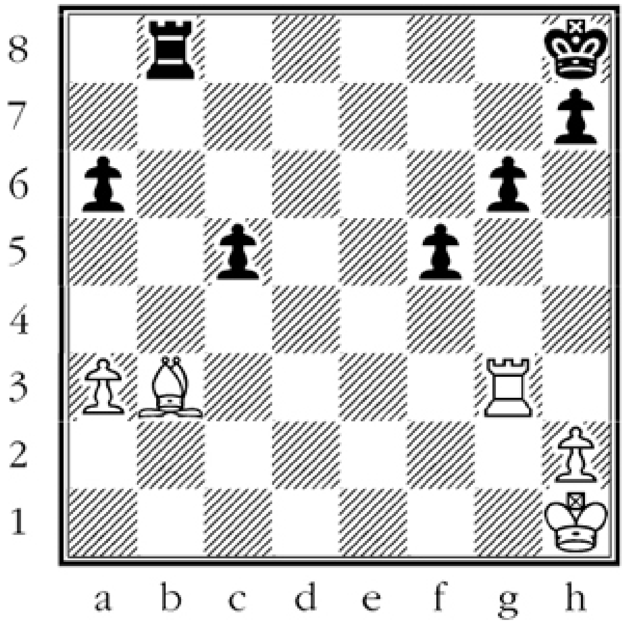
Endings in which you are a piece to the good are generally won for you *if you have one or more pawns.*

If you have a rook and bishop (or rook and knight) against a rook, the position usually winds up as a draw. Once in a great while a position turns up where the player with superior forces wins because of some chance finesse. But the general rule is that such positions are drawn.

With pawns on the board the situation changes radically. When you have at least one pawn left, *you have a chance of queening it.* At that point your extra piece goes to work for you, and makes your victory possible.

The following endgames will show you how to win the game.

A Masterpiece of Technique (D)



30

White to move

Black has three pawns for a piece. In some situations this would be good enough to draw. Not here, however, as White demonstrates, with powerful and economical handling of his forces.

Positions like this one occur fairly often in over-the-board play. Here are the outstanding features of White’s winning method: (1) White must make the weight of his extra piece tell. He must place his pieces to the best advantage, menace the hostile pawns; provoke their advance (which will make them more susceptible to attack); force them into a position where any change will be for the worse.

(2) White must play his king to a centralized position (say the square e5 – or d5 or c4 – where it can put added pressure on Black’s game.

(3) White must avoid exchanging pawns. These pawns may seem insignificant at the present time but *they are potential queening candidates.* Without these pawns White cannot win.

(4) Another reason White must avoid pawn exchanges is that he means to *win* the black pawns; *exchanging* pawn for pawn would ruin this plan.

1.Rd3!

Taking an open file, where the rook will have maximum mobility.

1…a5 2.Kg2!

Another good move. The king heads for the center.

2…Kg7 3.Kf3 Kf6

Black follows suit with his king. He tries to hold as much ground as possible.

4.h4!

In order to penetrate further by Kf4 without being driven back by …g5.

Once White gets that far, he can contemplate further penetration – in due time – with Rd6+ and Ke5.To learn the most from this ending, you must study White’s gradual encroachment of more and more terrain.

4…Rb6

To guard the sixth rank from eventual invasion. 4…g5 may look good here, but it would weaken Black’s f-pawn. The why and wherefore of this will soon become clear to you.

5.Bc2

White dallies with the idea of a frontal attack on the c-pawn by Rc3. But Black is alert and immediately scotches this plan.

5…Ke5

Now Black threatens 6…c4 7.Rc3 Kd4. So White tries a different way.

6.Bb3 Kf6 7.Bc4

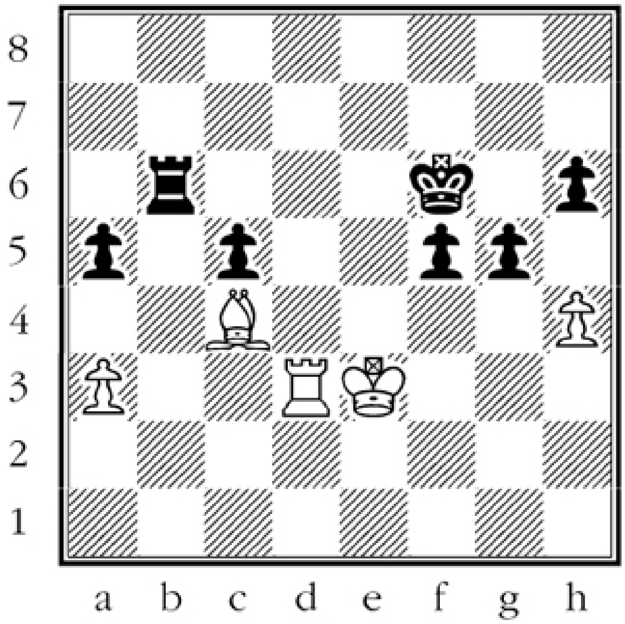
Now the bishop is self-supporting and White’s rook can become active.

7…h6 8.Ke3!

Not 8.Kf4? g5+!, exchanging pawns. White’s h-pawn is to play and active role.

8…g5

Inevitable. Thus, if 8…Rc6 9.Rd7 with unpleasant threats, such as …Ra7. (D)



31

White to move

White’s next move is the key to the ending. It “fixes” Black’s h-pawn as a decisive weakness. White also establishes all the remaining black pawns as targets.

9.h5!! Rc6 10.Rd7 Rb6 11.Rh7 Ke5 12.Re7+ Kd6

Or 12…Kf6 13.Rc7 and White wins.

13.Re6+ Kc7 14.Re5!

Note that 14.Rg6 also wins. But the text is more in accord with White’s plan: he creates an entering wedge for his king.

14…f4+ 15.Ke4 Rc6

If 15…Kc6 16.Re6+ Kc7 17.Rg6! followed by Kd5 and White wins.

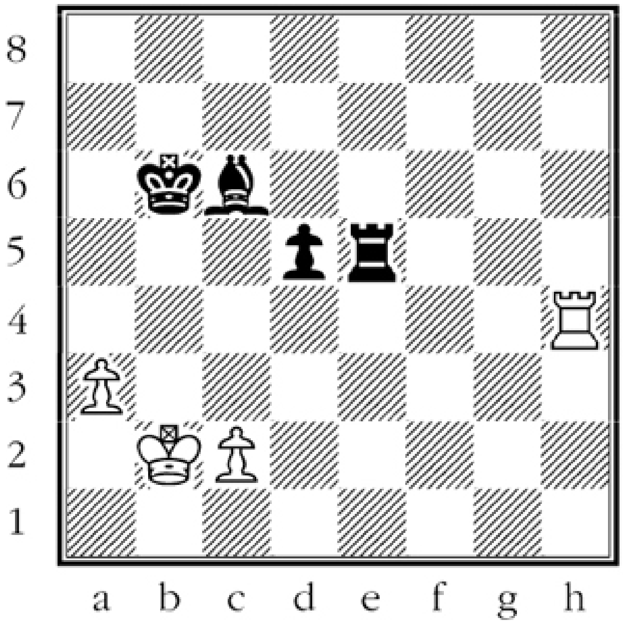
16.Re7+ Kd8

The alternative 16…Kb6 allows 17.Rg7 followed by Rg6 and Kd5.

17.Rg7 Rd6 18.Ke5 Rd4 19.Bd5 f3 20.Kd6 Kc8 21.Rg8#

White’s penetration plan worked out beautifully.

A Difficult Ending (D)



Black to move

Though Black’s play in this ending is highly systematic, the process is extremely interesting. The ending takes a great deal of patience, but Black’s logical procedure makes it seem easy!

Black begins with the basic idea that White can never allow the exchange of rooks.

Once such an exchange takes place, White will be helpless against the advance of Black’s king and bishop to a point where the white pawns will be defenseless. Then, eventually, Black will queen his remaining pawn.

(If you are not certain of this, remove the rooks and play about ten moves for either side.)

The fact that White cannot exchange rooks gives Black’s forces great power. *It means that Black can consistently strengthen his position by offering the exchange of rooks.*

White will always have to withdraw from the exchange, giving ground each time. This gives Black the basis for a policy of gradual penetration. (But remember this: Black must never allow the exchange of his lone pawn.) Now what is to be the object of Black’s pressure? Clearly, White’s c-pawn.

The best way for Black to menace it will be to place his rook on the seventh rank and his bishop at e4 or f5.

This will reduce White's rook to complete passivity on the c-file. Black can then advance his king with decisive effect.

1…Re4 2.Rh8 Kc5 3.Rc8 Re8! 4.Rc7 Kd6 5.Rh7 Bb5 6.Kc3 Ba4

Black threatens 7…Rc8+ winning the c-pawn. This forces White's rook to the second rank.

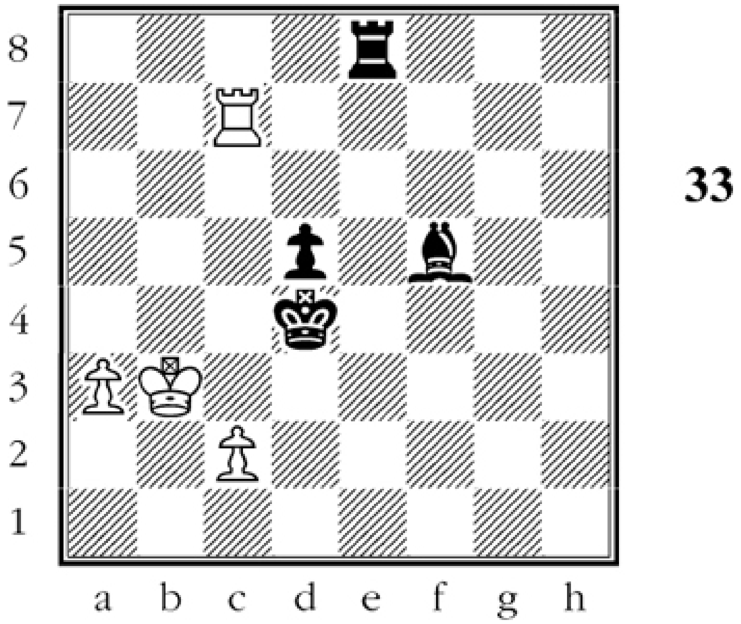
7.Rh2 Re4 8.Rg2 Kc5 9.Rh2 Re3+ 10.Kb2 Bb5!

In order to take the second rank with …Re2. Black's constriction plan is making progress.

11.Rh8 Re2 12.Rc8+ Kd4 13.Kb3 Bc4+ 14.Kb2 Bd3!

Now Black is attacking the vulnerable pawn twice; and by bringing his bishop to f5 he can hound White's rook as well.

15.Kb3 Bf5 16.Rc7 Re8!! (D)



White to move

Black's masterly retreat with his rook threatens to force the exchange of rooks by …Rc8. This explains the purpose behind Black's last two moves.

White is embarrassed for a good move. If he plays 17.Rb7 then 17…Rc8 wins the wretched c-pawn. On other moves of White's rook along the seventh rank …Rb8+ wins that pawn.

17.c3+ Kd3 18.Rc5 Rb8+

Driving off White's king. The c-pawn is definitely lost now.

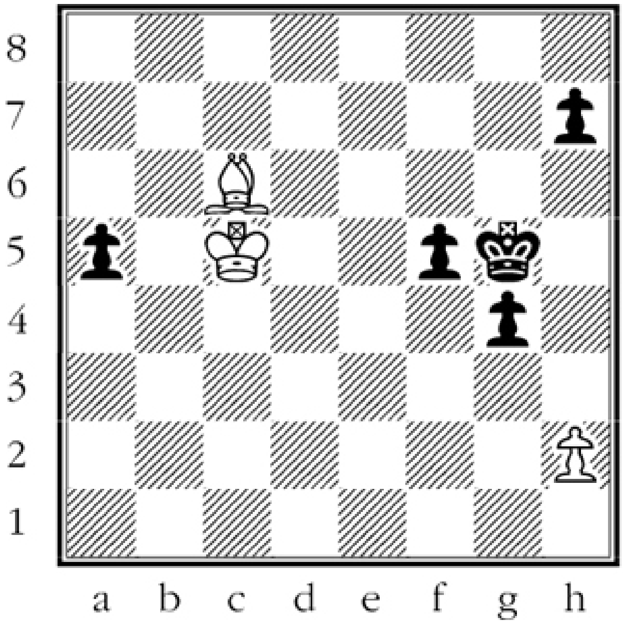
19.Ka4 Be4 20.Rc7 Kc2 21.Rc6 Bd3 22.Rc5 Bc4 23.Ka5 Kxc3 24.a4 Ra8+

White resigns. Black's accurate play was a triumph of logic.

Victory for the Passed Pawns

Three pawns, as we know, are about equal in value to a minor piece. Toward the beginning of the game we generally rate the piece higher, as its chances of being useful are much greater. Toward the end of the game, the pawns (especially if they have queening possibilities and the position is simplified) may weigh more heavily in the scale.

In the following ending the pawns are definitely preferable. (D)



34

White to move

Black's winning plan is based on the fact that White's king has to lose time removing Black's remote passed a-pawn. The upshot is that Black's kingside pawns prove too much for the unaided bishop.

1.Kb5 f4!

Black loses no time. Passed pawns must be pushed!

2.Kxa5 f3!

A menacing-looking pawn.

3.Kb4 Kf4 4.Kc4 Ke3!

Very good. He keeps White's king away from the queening square.

5.Kd5 h5 6.Bd7

On other moves Black simply advances his pawns and ultimately queens one of them.

6…f2 7.Bb5 Kf3 8.Ke5 Kg2 9.Kf4 Kxh2!

Preparing the advance of the g-pawn.

10.Ke3 g3

White resigns, as Black is about to continue victoriously with …g2 and …g1Q. An instructive ending.

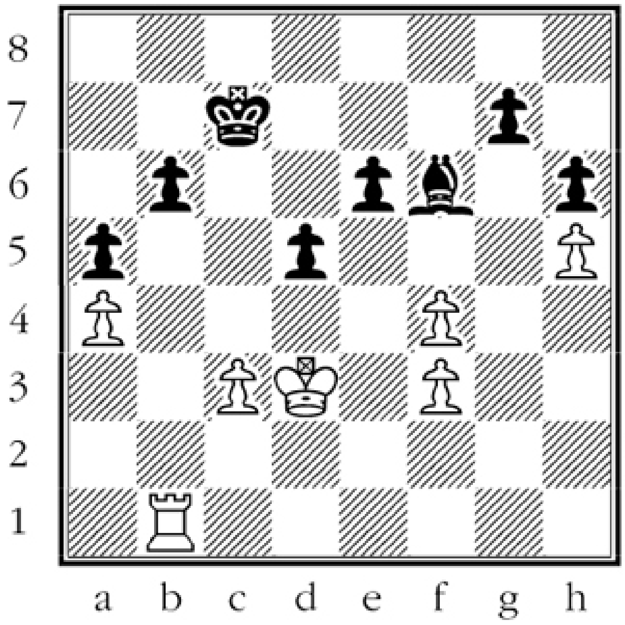
Chapter Five

Endgames with the Exchange Ahead

To be the exchange ahead – to have a rook for a bishop or knight – generally assures you an easy win. Nevertheless, it is well for you to be prepared for a little trouble, or at least some hard work. The advantage of the exchange does not win by itself!

The Rook's Superior Mobility

The following endgame shows what the rook can sometimes accomplish on open lines. (D)



35

White to move

White has the exchange for a pawn. Naturally this makes the win harder than if Black were not a pawn up.

White's pawns are all isolated, which gives us a discouraged feeling that they cannot be put to good use. So White must give some thought to the problem of employing these pawns profitably.

He has one consolation: Black's pawns are not in very good shape either. Black's g-pawn, e-pawn, and b-pawn *require protection by pieces.*

These pawns are *“backward”* pawns; they can no longer be protected by neighboring pawns. They are therefore vulnerable to attack from the rook. Luckily, the rook has a lot of scope. It has a choice of three open files.

So, here is White’s diagnosis:

To win on the superior mobility of his rook, he needs to create additional open lines by c3-c4! and c4-c5!. This will also create points of invasion for his king.

It will not be long before Black will find himself in trouble because his bishop and king are tied to the defense of weak pawns.

1.c4! Kc6

Or 1…dxc4+ 2.Kxc4 and White has a standing threat of Kb5 (or Kd5 after f4-f5 and the resulting exchange of pawns).

2.Rb5! Be7 3.f5!

Splendid timing. Watch how the mobility of White’s pieces is increased.

3…dxc4+ 4.Kxc4 exf5 5.Rxf5 Bf6

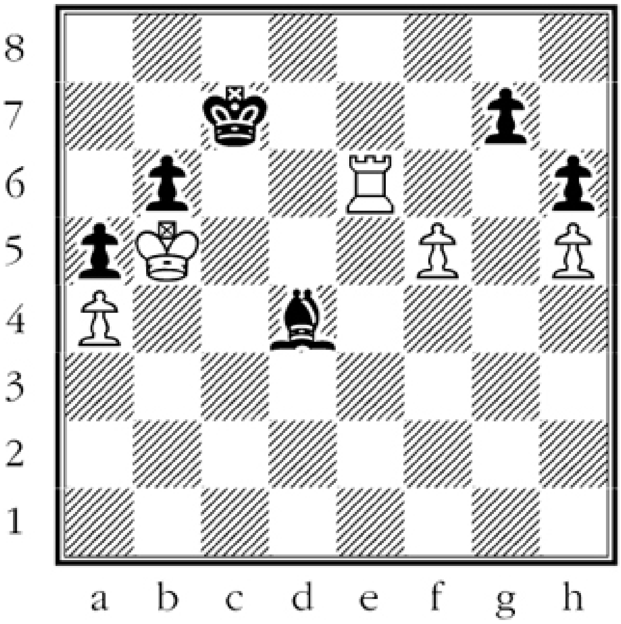
Though Black’s position *looks* as solid as it did at the beginning, White has actually made great progress.

His next goal: a check on the sixth rank with his rook, forcing Black’s king to retreat.

6.f4 Kd6 7.Rb5 Kc6 8.f5

Black feels the noose tightening, for if 8…Ba1 9.Rb1 Bf6 10.Re1 and White is ready for the decisive Re6+.

8…Bg5 9.Re5! Bf6 10.Re6+! Kc7 11.Kb5 Bd4 (D)



White to move

White is ready to exploit the fact that Black has achieved his best defensive position. The bishop protects two weak pawns, and White forces Black to choose between these weak pawns.

12.Rc6+!!

Magnificent endgame play!

Black's laborious defense topples as a result of this masterstroke, for if 12…Kb7 13.Rd6! and White wins a pawn, depending on where the menaced bishop moves.

12…Kd7 13.Rc4! Bc5 14.Rg4! Ke7

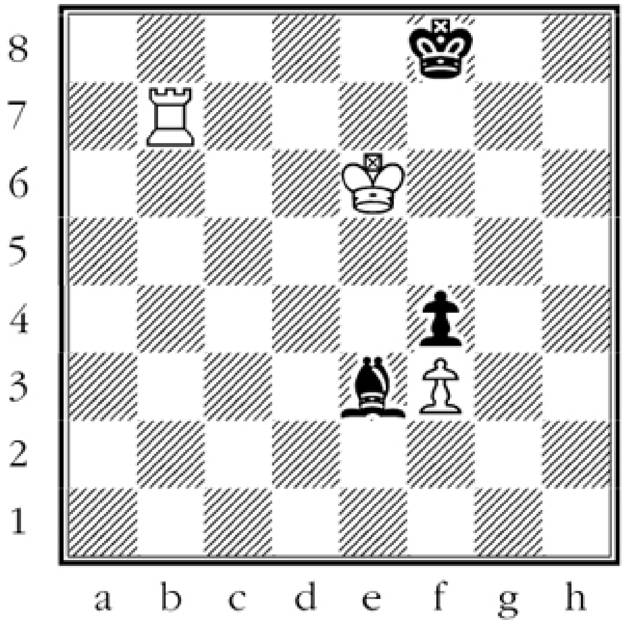
He cannot save the g-pawn because he cannot play …Bd4. Thus White's rook triumphs.

15.Rxg7+ Kf6 16.Rg6+ Kxf5 17.Rxh6 Black resigns.

For White is about to force an easily won king-and-pawn ending with 18.Rxb6.

Delicate Rook Maneuvers

From this ending, too, you can learn how to take splendid advantage of the rook's superior mobility. (D)



37

White to move

This ending looks easy at first sight. Apparently White need only attack the black pawn with his rook and king, and play Rxf4, giving up the exchange to get a won king and pawn ending. This is easier said than done!

1.Rf7+! Ke8

Best. If 1…Kg8 2.Kf6 Bd4+ 3.Kg6 Be3 4.Rf5 and the unfortunate mating position of Black's king loses quickly for him.

Thus, if 4…Bd2 (If 4…Bc1 5.Rc5 wins the same way.) 5.Rd5! (threatens mate) 5…Bb4 6.Rd8+ Bf8 7.Re8 or any other rook move on the rank followed by checkmate next move!

2.Rf5!

Now Black's choice of moves is limited.

2…Bd2

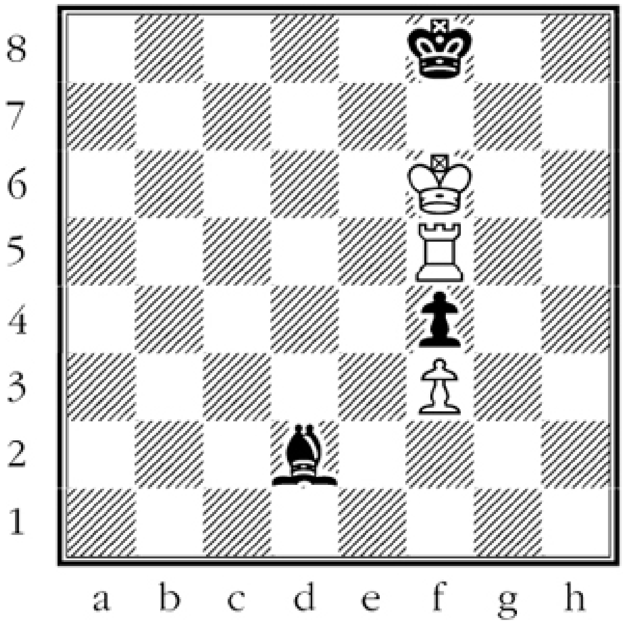
If 2…Bc1? 3.Rc5 (threatening mate) wins on the spot. And if 2…Kd8 3.Rf8+! drives Black's king away so that after 3…Kc7 4.Ke5 Kd7 5.Rxf4! Bxf4+ 6.Kxf4 Ke6 7.Kg5 and White assures the queening of his pawn (see Diagram 28).

White can now win the pawn with 3.Ke5 Ke7 4.Rxf4? Bxf4+ 5.Kxf4. But after 5…Kf6! Black has the opposition and the position is drawn (See Diagram 29).

3.Kf6!

Taking advantage of the fact that Black dare not play 3…Kd8?? or 3…Kd7?? because of 4.Rd5+.

3…Kf8 (D)



38

White to move

Now White succeeds in driving off the black king.

4.Rc5!

White threatens mate.

4…Kg8

If Black parries with 4…Ke8 then 5.Kg7!! followed by Re5+ and Re4. Black’s king is then cut off from the e-file, so that White can comfortably play Kg6 and Kf5 and then capture the black pawn with an easily won king and pawn ending.

5.Rc8+!

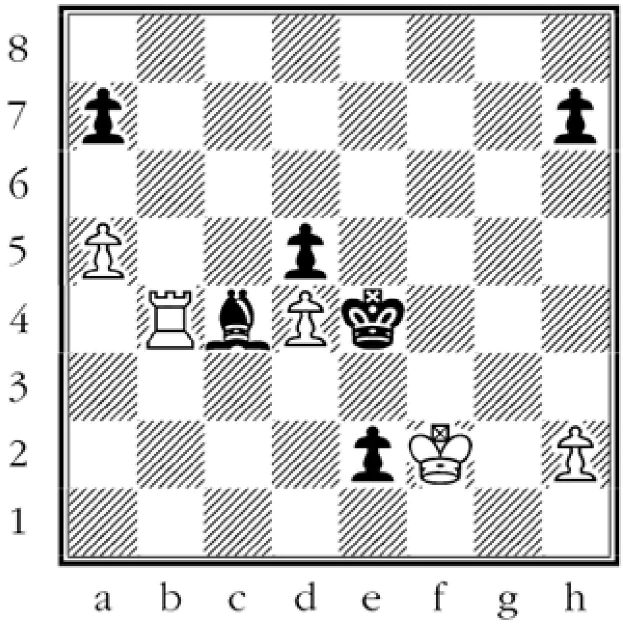
Driving the black king away.

5…Kh7 6.Kf7! Black resigns.

For now, no matter how Black replies, White plays Rg8. Then, with Black’s king hopelessly cut off, White continues with Kf6 and Kf5, picking off the black pawn at his leisure. The resulting king-and-pawn ending is an easy win.

White’s rook maneuvers give us a vivid notion of the power of this piece.

Passed Pawns Fight for Supremacy (D)



39

White to move

White has the exchange in return for a pawn. His king is tied down by a dangerous passed pawn. In addition, he must watch out for …Kd3-d2 or else …Kxd4 followed by the advance of the d-pawn.

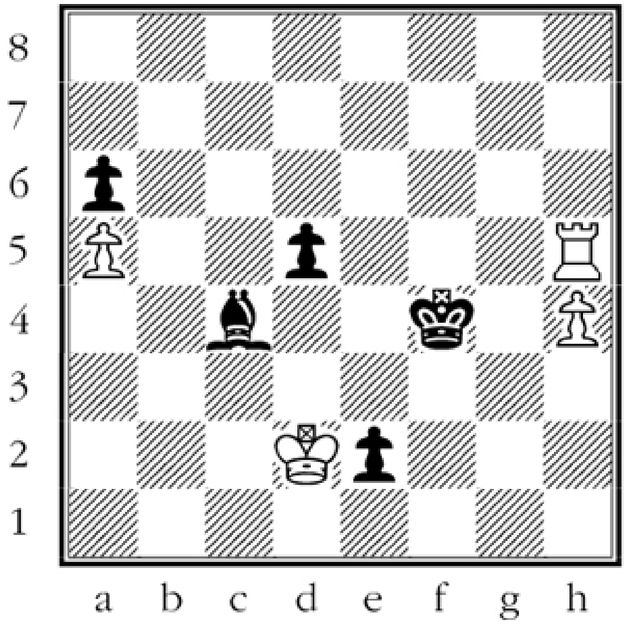
White's rook is bound to do great damage on the seventh rank, but first he must get a shipshape position against Black's threats, so: **1.Ke1 Kxd4 2.Kd2**

Now White is safe and therefore ready to invade the seventh rank.

2…a6 3.Rb7 Bd3 4.Rc7!

Forcing the advance of Black's h-pawn, as Black's bishop is overloaded with defensive tasks. White makes telling use of the rook's superior mobility.

4…h5 5.h4 Ke4 6.Re7+ Kd4 7.Re6! Bc4 8.Rh6 Ke4 9.Rxh5 Kf4 (D)



40

White to move

White's clever rook maneuvers have won material. He is now ready to advance his own passed pawn, but he must keep an eye on the possibility of …Kf3 and …Kf2, whereby Black renews his threats to queen the e-pawn.

10.Rg5!

White cuts off Black's king from any attempt to stop the passed pawn. Black must seize his last desperate chance for counterplay.

10…d4 11.Rg7 d3 12.h5 Kf3 13.Re7

White is too wily for 13.h6 Kf2 14.h7??? 14…e1Q#!.

13…Kf2 14.h6 Bg8 15.h7!

Very sly. On 15…Bxh7 White interpolates 16.Rf7+! (not 16.Rxh7??) and *then* picks up the bishop.

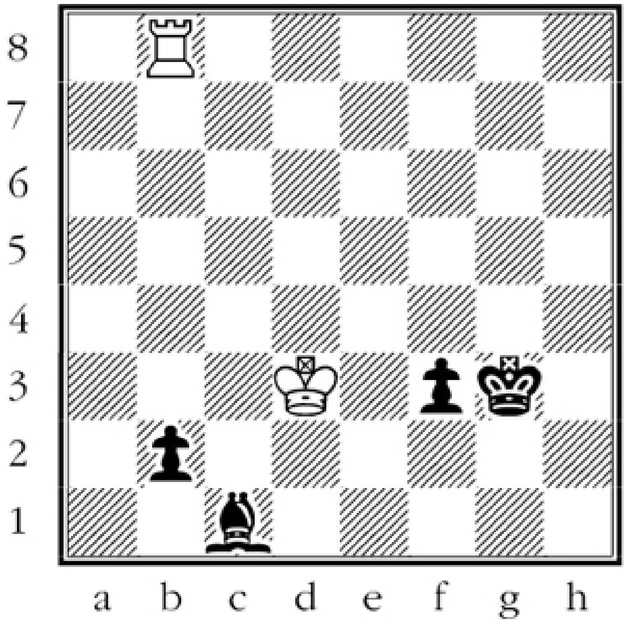
15…e1Q+ 16.Rxe1 Bxh7 17.Re6 Black resigns.

White has reduced Black to helplessness in view of the coming Rxa6 followed by the queening of the a-pawn.

A very pleasing ending by reason of the rook's agile maneuvers.

Victory for the Minor Piece

When a player is the exchange down and has two extra pawns by way of compensation, the material may be said to be fairly even. Where the pawns are passed and well advanced, the rook is definitely at a disadvantage. (D)



41

White to move

White is in trouble because his forces are split. His king has to stop one of the passed pawns; his rook has to stop the other one. Black's winning plan is to give up his b-pawn at the right moment, forcing the queening of his other pawn.

1.Rg8+ Kf2 2.Kc2 Ke2 3.Re8+ Kf1! 4.Rf8 f2

Now that this pawn is poised to queen, Black's only problem is to find shelter for his king against the rook checks.

5.Rf7 Ke2 6.Re7+ Kf3 7.Rf7+ Bf4!

White resigns, as the f-pawn must queen. Thus we see that when passed pawns are dangerously far advanced, even a rook is helpless against them.

Chapter Six

Rook and Pawn Endings

This type of ending occurs more frequently than any other kind of endgame. For this reason it is valuable to know something about the qualities of the rook.

One of the most powerful ways to post a rook is on an open seventh rank. Here your rook can create havoc among the opposing pawns.

The rook can accomplish a great deal when it is on open lines – open files and open ranks.

When you have a passed pawn, aim to place your rook *behind* it. Then the rook aids the pawn's push toward the queening square.

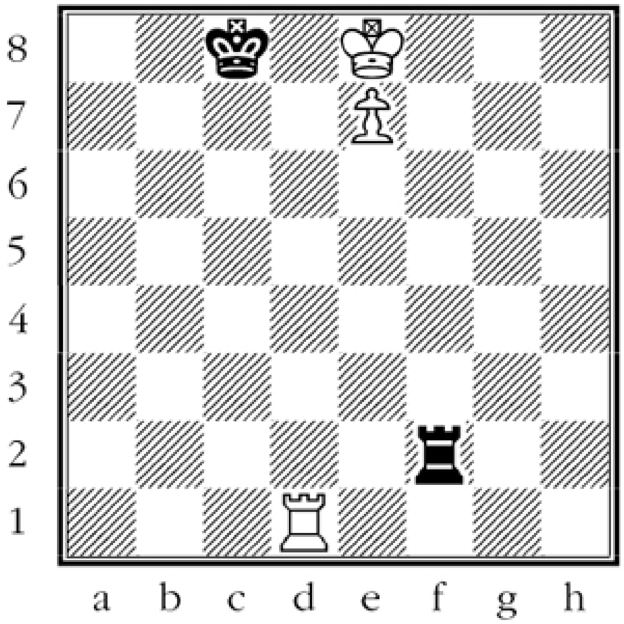
If your opponent has the passed pawn, you likewise do best to place your rook behind the pawn, not in front of it. In the latter position, your rook loses much of its mobility, because if it gives up the blockade, the passed pawn can march toward the queening square.

In this type of ending the kings, too, play a very active role, guarding their own pawns and attacking the enemy's.

Remember that when you are a pawn to the good in a rook and pawn ending, you can often reduce your opponent to helplessness by threatening the exchange of rooks, bringing the game to a simple king and pawn ending which is easily won.

Two Basic Endings

The position in Diagram 42 is of fundamental importance, as it shows a basic setup that can often be reached when a player is a pawn ahead. (D)



42

White to move

In order to be able to win, White must make room for his king, and he must then shield his king from checks by the black rook. White does this by “building a bridge.”

1.Rc1+ Kb7

White needs a subtle preparatory move before moving his king out and threatening to queen.

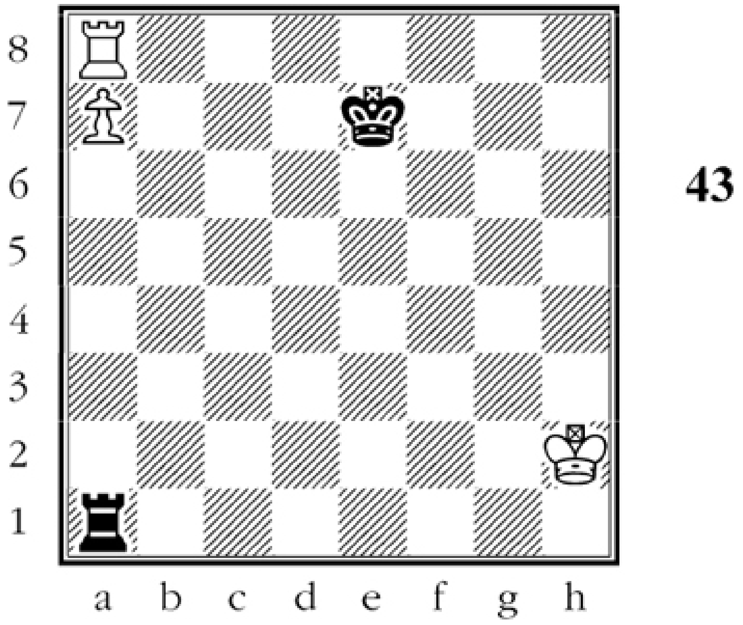
2.Rc4!!

Thus if 2.Kd7 Rd2+ 3.Ke6 Re2+ 4.Kd6 Rd2+ 5.Ke5 Re2+ and it is clear that White is not getting anywhere.

2…Rf1 3.Kd7 Rd1+ 4.Ke6 Re1+ 5.Kf6 Rf1+ 6.Ke5 Re1+ 7.Re4!

Now you can see the point of White’s first and second moves. He drove away the black king, and now he has shielded the white king from checks. The passed pawn must queen.

The next ending (Diagram 43) shows a stratagem that often proves useful. (D)



White to move

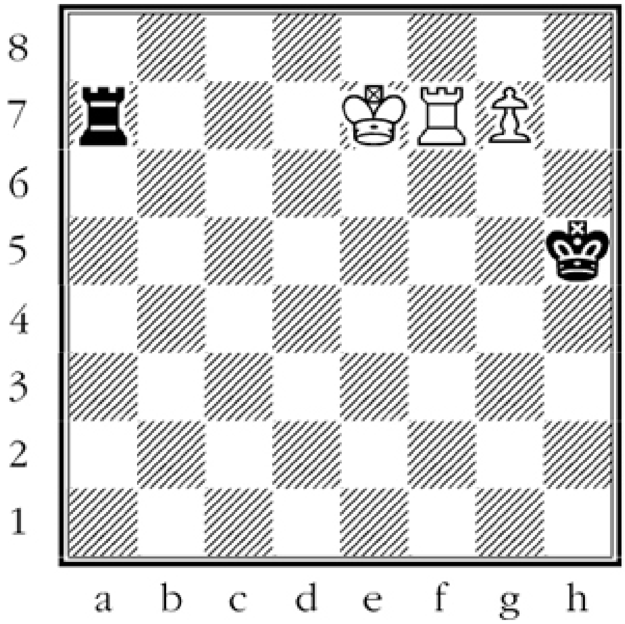
Black threatens to bring his king to b7, winning White’s extra pawn and thereby achieving a draw. But White wins by an “X-ray attack.”

1.Rh8!! Rxa7 2.Rh7+

This X-ray attack forces Black’s king to move, after which White plays Rxa7, followed by a quick checkmate.

Passed Pawns Win

In Diagram 44 it takes some neat play to win with the extra pawn. (D)



44

White to move

White’s pawn is on the point of queening, but White’s king is in check, and 1.Kf8 is futile in view of 1…Ra8+. To get a hint of the position that White needs, look at Diagram 19.

Believe it or not, the play from Diagram 44 requires White to play his king all the way back to g2. Thus: **1.Kf6**

If now 1…Ra8 2.Rf8 forces the queening of the passed pawn. So Black must keep on checking.

1…Ra6+

Black hopes for 2.Ke5?, when 2…Rg6, followed by …Kh6 will win the dangerous pawn. But White has a finesse: **2.Kf5!**

So that if 2…Rg6 3.g8Q Rxg8 4.Rh7# (See Diagram 4.)

2…Ra5+ 3.Kf4! Ra4+

And now if 3…Rg5 White has a pin with 4.Rf5!, knocking out the black rook and thus forcing the queening of the pawn.

4.Kf3!

White is endlessly resourceful. This time he figures on 4…Rg4 5.Rf5+ Kh4 (forced) 6.Rf4! again winning by pinning.

4…Ra3+ 5.Kg2 Ra2+ 6.Rf2!

At last Black is out of checks. His reply is forced:

6…Ra8 7.Rf8!

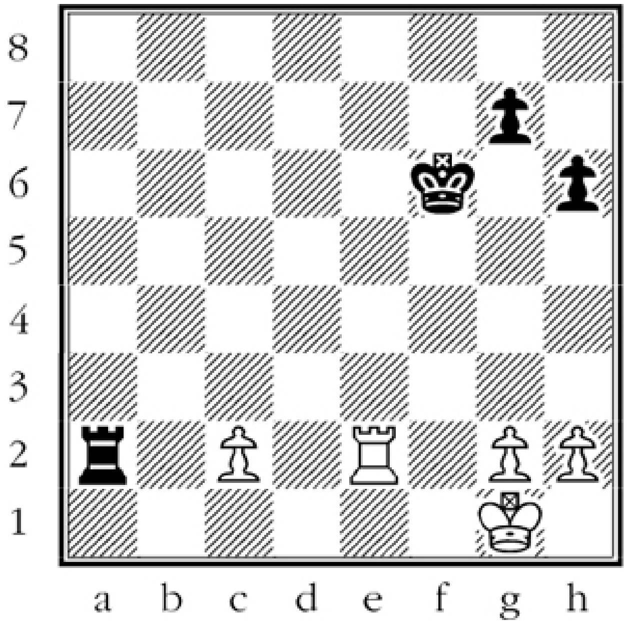
Of course Black cannot exchange rooks. Here is his last try:

7…Ra2+ 8.Kf3 Ra3+ 9.Ke4 Ra4+ 10.Kd5 Ra5+ 11.Kc6 Ra6+ 12.Kb7 Black resigns.

At last the pawn is able to queen.

This delightful ending shows how wrong some players are in thinking that endgames do not allow scope for combinative play.

In Diagram 45, however, White proceeds in highly systematic manner. (D)



45

White to move

Note that White’s rook very efficiently cuts off the black king from contact with White’s passed pawn. On the other hand, White’s king can actively support the passed pawn.

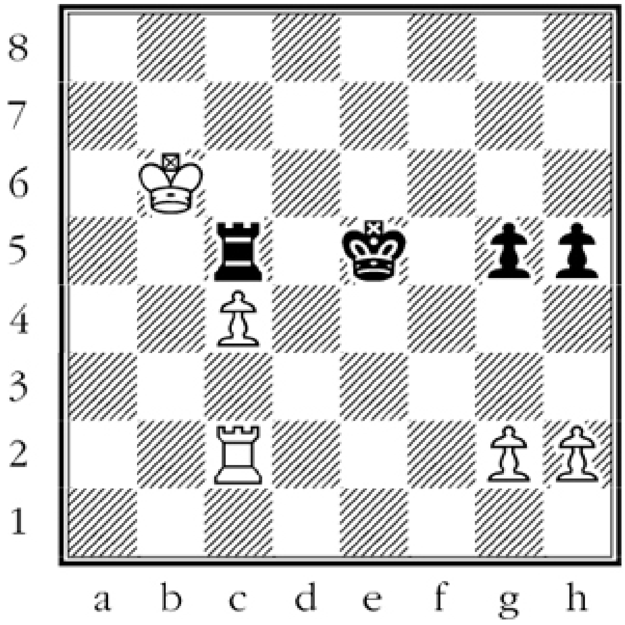
1.Kf2 h5 2.Ke1! g5 3.Kd2 Kf5 4.Kd3 Ra8 5.c4 Rd8+ 6.Kc3 Rc8

To prevent c4-c5; but White makes progress all the same.

7.Kb4 Rb8+ 8.Ka5 Rc8 9.Kb5 Rb8+ 10.Ka6 Rc8

Now White gets his rook *behind* the passed pawn.

11.Rc2! Ke5 12.Kb7! Rc5 13.Kb6! Black resigns. (D)

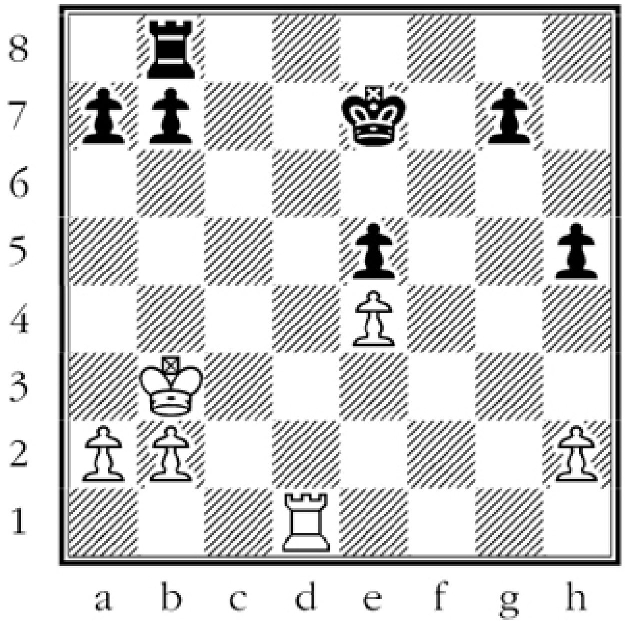


46

Black to move

Black resigns because 13…Kd6?? 14.Rd2+ loses on the spot; and if 13…Rc8 14.c5 and Black can do nothing against c5-c6-c7 and Kb7.

Diagram 47 gives the winner greater difficulties. (D)



47

Black to move

Black is a pawn ahead, but he has no passed pawn. To get one, he advances his king-side pawns. His two-to-one majority should give him a passed pawn.

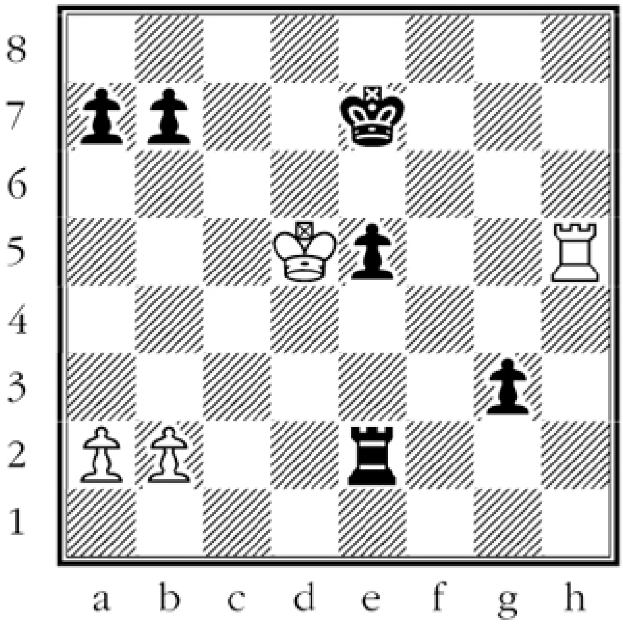
1…g5! 2.Rg1 g4

If now 3.h3 Rg8 4.hxg4 Rxg4 and Black has his passed pawn.

3.Rc1 Rd8 4.Rf1 Rd3+!

Very strong, for if 5.Kc2 Re3 6.Rf5 Re2+! 7.Kc3 Rxh2 8.Rxe5+ Kf6 9.Rf5+ Kg6 and Black’s *two connected passed pawns* win quickly for Black by their advance.

5.Kc4 Rd4+ 6.Kc5 Rxe4 7.Rf5 h4 8.Rh5 g3 9.hxg3 hxg3 10.Kd5 Re2! (D)



48

White to move

As in Diagram 45, the weaker side’s king is cut off from the remote passed pawn. And if 11.Rxe5+ Rxe5+ 12.Kxe5 g2 and the passed pawn queens.

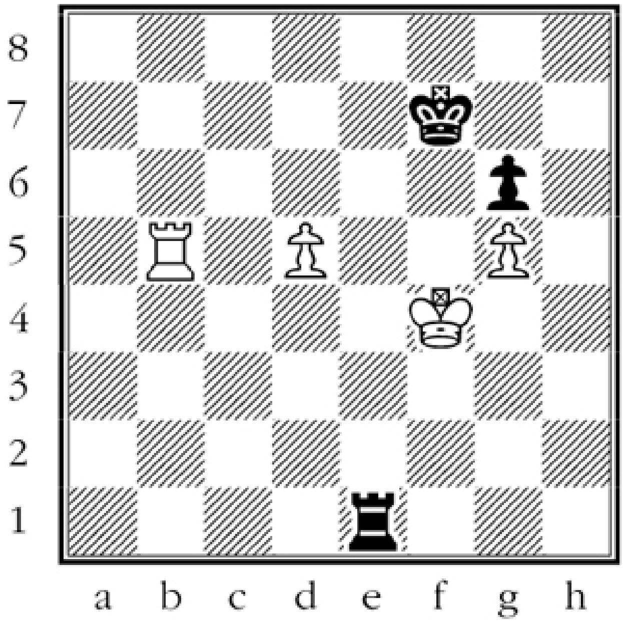
11.Rg5 g2 12.b4 Kf6 13.Rg8 Kf5 14.Rg7 Rd2+!

Chasing White’s king away from Black’s other passed pawn.

15.Kc4 Kf4

White resigns, as Black’s king will support the advance of the g-pawn to the queening square.

We have previously discussed swapping down to a won king and pawn ending. Diagram 49 is an example of how to carry out the simplification. (D)



49

White to move

White has a passed d-pawn. Note also that Black’s remaining pawn is weak and White may be able to win it.

1.Rb7+ Kf8

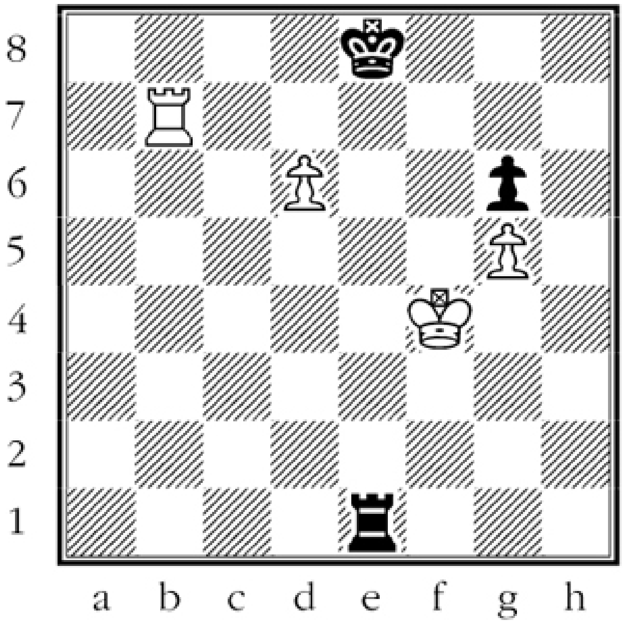
If 1…Ke8 (to approach the passed pawn), White has 2.Rg7, winning Black’s remaining pawn.

2.d6

Threatening Rb8+ and d6-d7, forcing the queening of the passed pawn.

2…Ke8

Black fights hard. If 3.Rb8+? Kd7. Or if 3.Rg7? Re6 4.d7+ Kd8 and Black can draw. (D)



50

White to move

White wins by giving up his extra pawn in order to get a won king-and-pawn ending.

3.Re7+! Rxe7 4.dxe7 Kd7

If now 4…Kxe7 5.Ke5 Kf7 6.Kd6 Kf8 7.Ke6 Kg7 8.Ke7 Kh7 9.Kf7 winning Black’s pawn. White then has a standard win as in Diagram 27.

Black prays for 5.Ke5? Kxe7 when he has the opposition and the white king cannot penetrate.

5.Ke4! Ke8

If 5…Kxe7 6.Ke5! and White’s king penetrates as in the note to White’s fourth move.

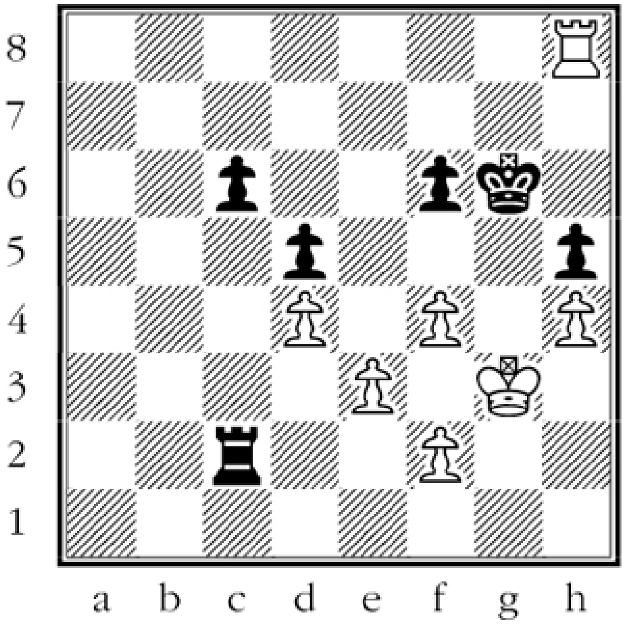
6.Kd5 Kd7

And if 6…Kxe7 7.Ke5! wins.

7.e8Q+! Kxe8 8.Ke6 Black resigns.

If 8…Kf8 9.Kf6 and wins as previously shown.

And in Diagram 51, too, White wins instructively by relying on simplification into a king and pawn ending. (D)



White to move

White’s pawn position is very unwieldy and his king has no way to play an active role. His logical course is to exchange his advanced f-pawn for Black’s h-pawn.

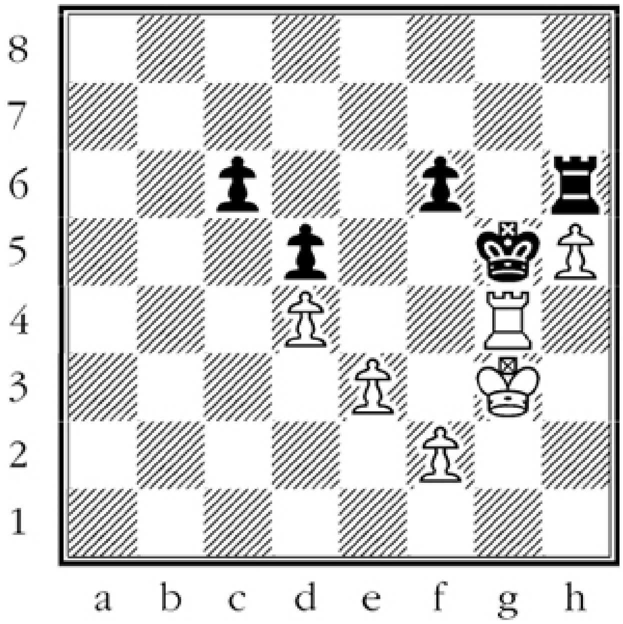
1.f5+! Kxf5 2.Rxh5+

Now White has created invasion possibilities for his king, and he has obtained a passed pawn.

2…Kg6 3.Rh8 Kf5 4.Rg8! Rc1 5.Kg2 Ra1 6.h5 Ra7 7.Rg3 Rh7 8.Rh3 Kg5 9.Kf3 Rh6

After 9…Rxh5 10.Rxh5+ Kxh5 Black is lost. This will be explained later on.

10.Rh1 Kf5 11.Kg3 Kg5 12.Rh4 Kf5 13.Rf4+ Kg5 14.Rg4+ (D)



52

Black to move

And here, too, if 14…Kxh5 15.Rh4+ Kg5 16.Rxh6 Kxh6 Black is lost, as we shall see later on.

14…Kf5 15.Kh4 Rh8 16.Rg7 Ra8 17.h6 Ra1 18.Rg3 Rh1+ 19.Rh3 Rg1

And now, if White carelessly plays 20.h7???, apparently succeeding in queening the pawn, Black has a perpetual check with 20…Rg4+! etc.!

20.Rf3+! Kg6 21.Rg3+! Rxg3 22.Kxg3 Kxh6 23.Kg4 Kg6 24.Kf4

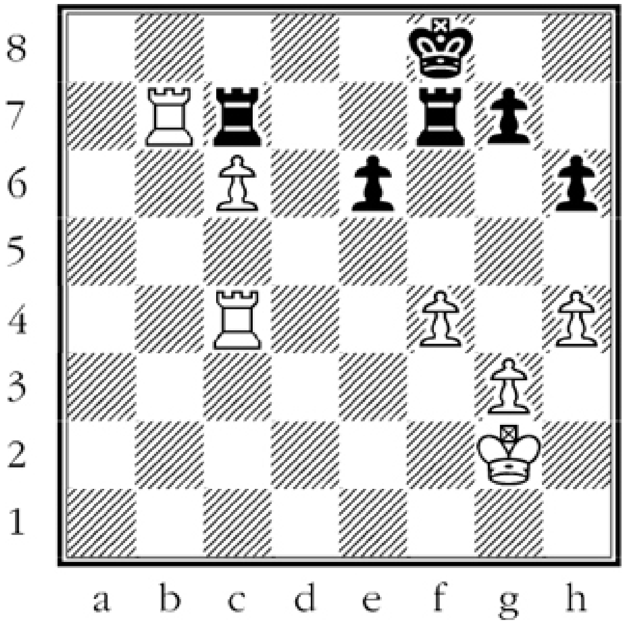
Now we see why White was so eager to get into the king and pawn ending at the cost of his extra pawn. If Black tries 24…f5 25.Ke5 Kg5 26.f3! Kg6 27.f4! wins for White, as Black must give up the f-pawn.

24…Kg7 25.Kf5 Kf7 26.f3! Black resigns.

For if 26…Ke7 27.Kg6 Ke6 28.f4 Ke7 29.f5 winning the f-pawn. And if 26…Kg7 27.Ke6 achieves the same result. A splendid example of efficient endgame planning.

Two Rooks Apiece

Endings with two rooks on a side do not occur very often. However, they are worth noticing for the aggressive power of two smoothly cooperating rooks. Take Diagram 53 as an example. (D)



White to move

For White to play 1.Rxc7? Rxc7 would be a big mistake, as Black could play …Ke7 and …Kd6 to win back his pawn. White must therefore rely on the offensive power of his rooks.

Therefore, in the position of Diagram 53, White plays:

1.Ra4!

This clever move threatens to win a rook by 2.Ra8+ Ke7 3.Rxc7+ etc.

Black is in trouble, for if he tries 1…Rxc6?? then 2.Ra8+ Rc8 3.Rxc8#! Not much better is 1…Rxb7 2.Ra8+ Ke7 3.cxb7 and the pawn queens. Even escape by 1…g6 2.Ra8+ Kg7 will not do for then 3.Raa7! forces the exchange of all the rooks, whereupon the passed pawn queens.

1…Rc8 2.Raa7 Rf5

And now if 2…Rf6 White wins with 3.Rd7! as his c-pawn is still immune. There might follow 3…g6 4.Rab7 h5 5.c7! Ke8 6.Rh7! and Black has no defense whatever to the coming 7.Rb8!.

3.Rxg7 Rxc6 4.Rh7

Threatening mate. The rooks have tremendous power on the seventh rank, with the result that White wins a second pawn.

4…Kg8 5.Rxh6 Rb5 6.h5 Rb3 7.Rg6+ Kh8 8.Rf6

Threatening 9.Rf8#.

8…Rb8 9.h6 Rg8 10.Rff7

Again threatening mate.

10…Rg6 11.Rf8+ Rg8 12.Rxg8+ Kxg8 13.Re7 Black resigns.

For White can win in a variety of ways, such as advancing his g-pawn.

This impressive example repeats the lesson taught repeatedly in this chapter – that the rook unfolds enormous power on open lines.

Chapter Seven

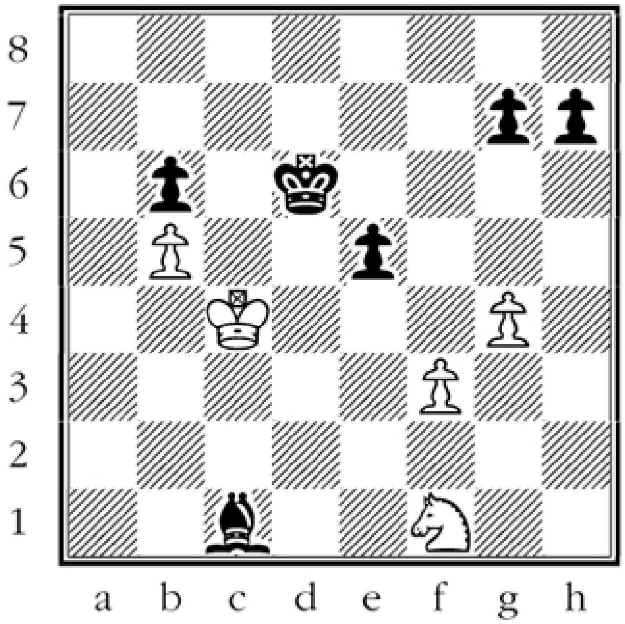
Endings with Minor Pieces

In endings with minor pieces we often see a struggle of bishop against knight.

There has been much argument pro and con as to which of these pieces is to be preferred. In modern master play the bishop is the more popular piece, mainly because of its long-range effectiveness. The following endgames illustrate the versatile powers of the bishop as against a knight.

The Agile Bishop

Although Black is a pawn ahead, he seems at first to have a puzzling task ahead of him, as his king cannot advance and there seems to be no immediate progress in sight. (D)



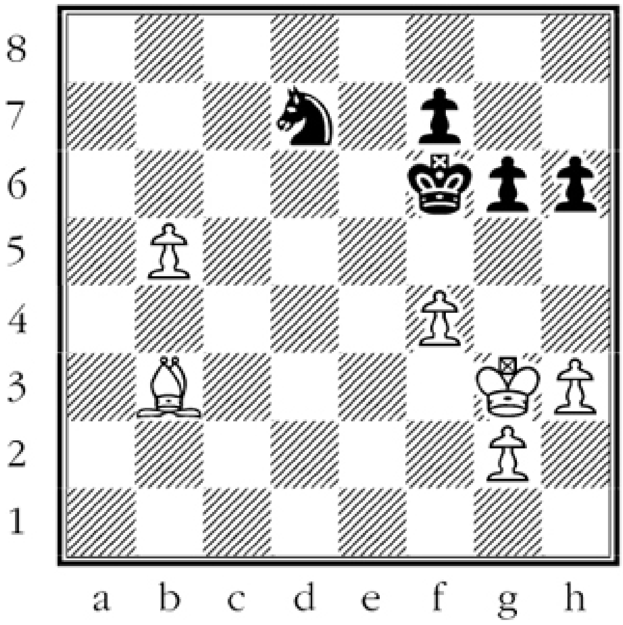
54

Black to move

The right way is 1…Bf4!, stalemating White’s knight. This forces the white king to move, so that Black can win another pawn shortly.

As indicated above, Black wins quickly with 1…Bf4!, paralyzing the knight. There might follow 2.Kb4 Kd5 and now Black threatens the devastating march …Kd4-d3-e2, winning the knight.

White has nothing better than 3.Kc3, allowing 3…Kc5 which wins White’s b-pawn. With two pawns ahead, one of them a passed pawn, Black wins easily. (Another winning method is 3…e4! assuring a successful raid by Black’s king.) In Diagram 55 White is not only a pawn ahead; he already has a remote passed pawn. The win may take a little time, but it should be absolutely certain! (D)



55

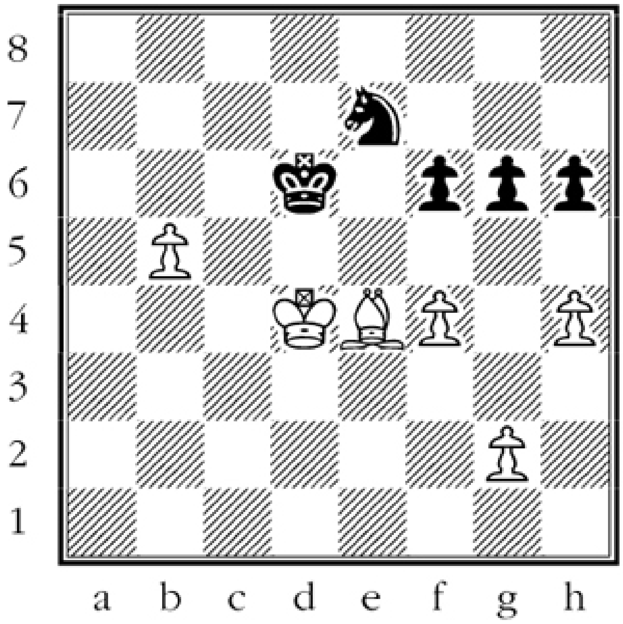
Black to move

White’s passed pawn splits up Black’s forces. The king and knight – or both – must prevent the pawn from queening. Meanwhile White invades the undefended kingside. The first part, as usual, is for him to centralize his king.

1.Kf3 Ke7 2.Ke3 f6

Necessary before he can play …Kd6. But now his g-pawn will be a weakness.

3.Kd4 Kd6 4.Bd1 Nb6 5.Bf3 Nc8 6.h4! Ne7 7.Be4! (D)


56

Black to move

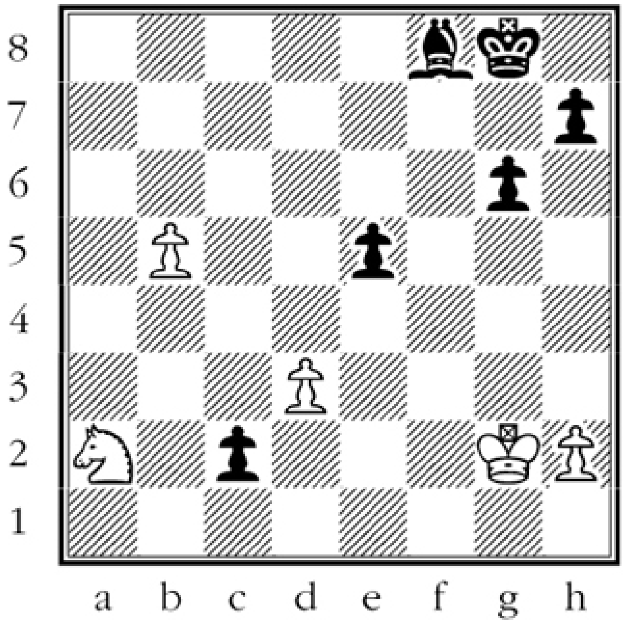
Now the knight is tied to the defense of the weak pawn. Black’s king dare not move, as that would allow penetration by Kc5. The passed pawn paralyzes the black king. Hence a weakening pawn move is forced.

If the black pawns get on light squares the bishop will become fearfully effective, for example: 7…f5 8.Bf3 Nc8 9.Bd5 Ne7 10.Bf7 Kd7 11.Ke5 followed by Kf6 winning all the pawns. If instead 7…h5 8.g3! f5 9.Bf3 Nc8 10.Bd5 Ne7 11.Bf7 Kd7 12.Ke5 as above.

7…g5 8.fxg5 fxg5 9.hxg5 hxg5 10.b6! g4 11.b7 Kc7 12.Ke5 g3 13.Kf4 Ng8 14.Kxg3 Nf6 15.Bf3 Nd7 16.Kf4 Kd6 17.Kf5 Ke7 18.Bc6! Nb8 19.Bb5! **Black resigns.**

Black realizes that although his king can cross to g7 and prevent White’s g-pawn from queening, White can bring his king to c7, winning the knight and then obtaining a new queen. Play this out for yourself!

Diagram 57 shows some exciting possibilities. (D)



57

Black to move

Black is a pawn ahead and he has a pawn that is ready to queen. Overconfidence can cause his downfall, thus: 1…Bh6 (or 1…Ba3) 2.b6! c1Q? 3.Nxc1 Bxc1?? 4.b7 and White's pawn cannot be stopped!

In Diagram 57 Black prudently plays:

1…e4!!

This opens up a diagonal to enable the bishop to stop the pawn in time.

2.dxe4 Bh6 3.b6 c1Q 4.Nxc1 Bxc1 5.Kf3

On 5.b7 Black has 5…Bf4 and wins.

5…Ba3 6.e5

Threatening 7.b7 followed by queening.

6…Bc5 7.b7 Ba7

Just in the nick of time. The rest is a typical ending with a piece to the good. Black either picks up more pawns or gives up his bishop for a different kind of advantage.

8.Kg4

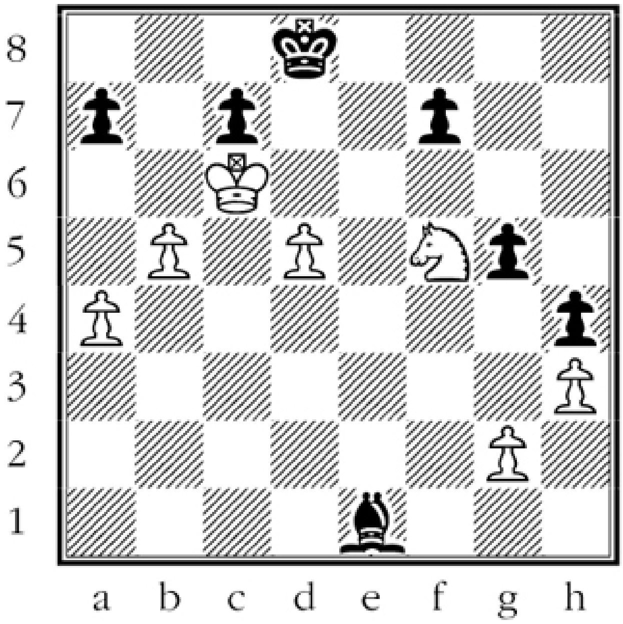
For example, 8.Ke4 Kf7 9.Kd5 Bb8 10.e6+ Ke7 11.h3 h6 and White loses the e-pawn.

8…h6 9.Kf4 Kf7 10.Ke4 Ke6 11.Kf4 Bb8 12.Kf3 Kxe5 13.Kg2 Kf4 14.Kh1 Kf3 15.Kg1 h5 16.Kh1 Ba7! 17.h4 Kg3 18.b8Q+ Bxb8 Black resigns.

White's last move was nothing but despair – the familiar spite check.

The Agile Knight

But it is wrong to despise the knight, as so many modern players do. This piece can sometimes unleash enormous power, especially where the opponent has most of his pawns on the same colored squares as those his bishop travels on. (D)



58

White to move

At the moment White does not have an advantage in material, but he will soon remedy this. The bishop has the impossible job of defending four pawns on the dark squares. These pawns in turn deprive the bishop of mobility.

In Diagram 58 White proceeds with:

1.d6!

This leaves Black no choice, for if 1…Ba5 2.d7! Bb6 3.Nh6! Ke7 4.Nxf7! winning.

1…cxd6 2.Nxd6 f6

And now 2…Ke7 is answered by 3.Nc8+ (forking check) followed by 4.Nxa7 with an easy win for White because of his two connected passed pawns.

3.Ne4!

The classic elegance of this knight move is delightful. The first point of the move is that 3…f5 allows 4.Nxg5. The second point is that Black cannot play 3…Bc3.

3…Ke7 4.Kb7!

Now comes the third point of the knight move: Black cannot defend his a-pawn with 4…Bf2.

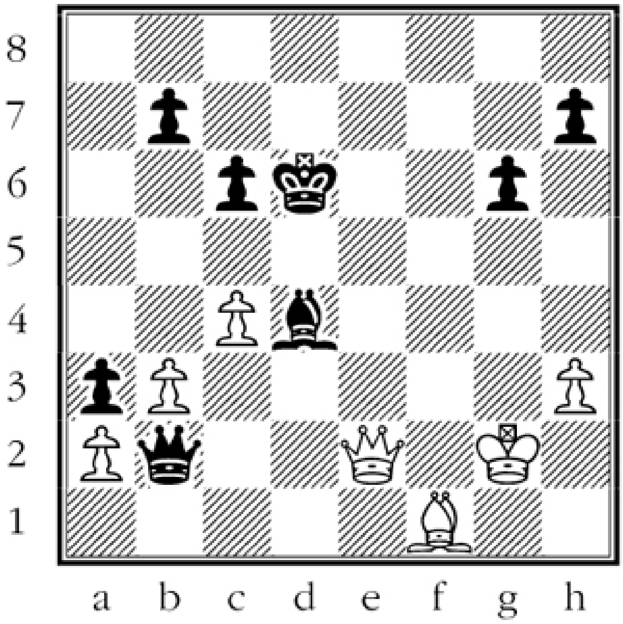
And so White wins the a-pawn, which gives him two connected passed pawns and a technically easy win.

Exception to an Exception

Diagram 59 illustrates an ending with bishops on opposite colors.

This is a term we use when one player has a bishop that travels on light squares, while his opponent has a bishop that travels on dark squares.

It sometimes happens in such endings that the advantage of a pawn – or even two pawns – is not enough to win. This is due to the fact that the player with the extra pawns does not command the squares to which his bishop does not have access. (See Diagram 77 for an explanation of this point.) (D)



59

White to move

Relying on the reputed drawing qualities of the bishops on opposite colors, White exchanges queens. He overlooks, however, that his bishop will be tied down by the queening threat of Black's pawn at b2.

From Diagram 59 play proceeds:

1.Qxb2 axb2! 2.Bd3

White's bishop must prevent Black's advanced pawn from queening. Black will therefore advance his two pawns to one on the kingside with a view to creating *a second passed pawn.*

2…Ke5 3.Kf3 Bc5 4.Bb1 Kf6 5.Ke4 h5! 6.Bc2 g5! 7.Bb1 Bd6! 8.Bc2 g4! 9.hxg4 hxg4

Now Black has his second passed pawn.

10.Bb1 g3 11.Kf3 Bf4

If now 12.Kxf4 g2 and the pawn must queen.

12.Kg2 Ke5 13.Kf3 Kd4

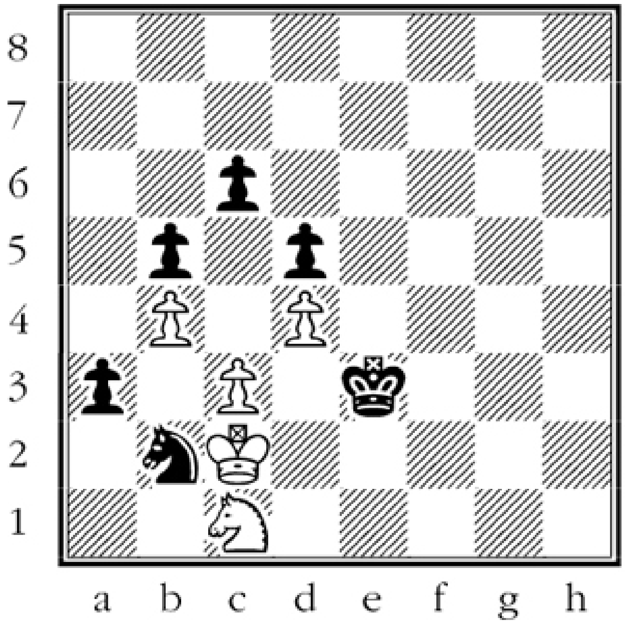
The rest is easy.

14.Kg2 Kc3 15.Kf3 Kd2 16.Kg2 Kc1 17.Be4 b1Q 18.Bxb1 Kxb1

Thus the queening of the pawn has won a piece in typical fashion, Leaving Black with an easy win.

Squeeze Play

In Diagram 60 we see a memorable knight and pawn ending in which the winner avoids several crafty traps. (D)



60

Black to move

Black is a pawn ahead. However, it looks as if his passed pawn may easily go lost. And, as soon becomes clear, there are other drawing dangers in the position. Nevertheless, Black can win by sacrificing his knight.

1…Nd3!! 2.Nb3

For if 2.Nxd3 a2 3.Kb2 Kxd3 and Black wins all of White’s pawns. And if 2.Na2 Ke2! 3.Kb3 Kd2 4.Kxa3 Kc2 when White is starved for moves.

2…Ne1+ 3.Kd1 Kd3! 4.Kxe1 Kxc3 5.Na1

Now Black can win back the piece with 5…Kb2? 6.Kd2 Kxa1 – but after 7.Kc1 Ka2 8.Kc2 the game is a draw!

5…Kxd4! 6.Nc2+ Kc3

All this is beautifully played. If now 7.Nxa3 Kb2 trapping the knight, which can be safely captured this time.

7.Kd1 a2 8.Kc1 d4 9.Na1 d3 10.Nc2

He tries to trick Black, since 10.Kd1 Kb2 is hopeless for White.

10…c5!

Of course not 10…dxc2?? stalemating White. After 10…c5! White resigns, for after 11.bxc5 dxc2! 12.c6 there follows 12…a1Q# – the perfect promotion.

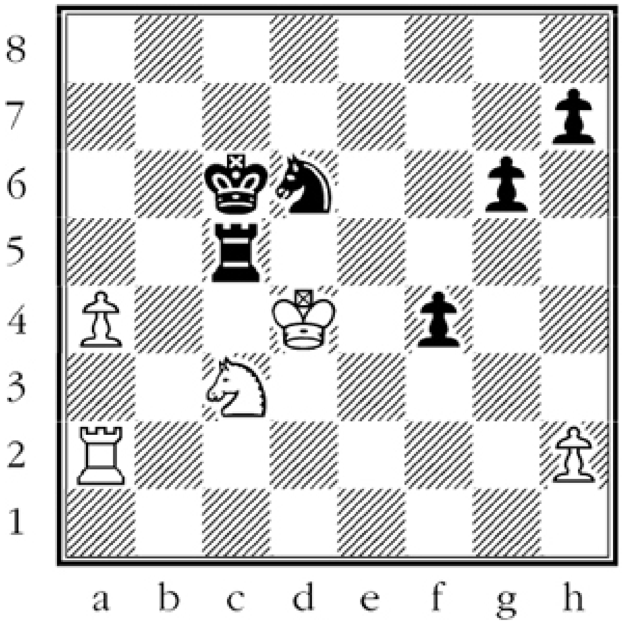
Chapter Eight

Sundry Endings

In this chapter we study several types of endings that are somewhat more difficult than the ones we have examined so far. In each case, except the last example, one of the players is a pawn ahead. And in each case, the winning method is highly instructive and of great practical value.

Rooks and Minor Pieces

Diagram 61 reveals a wealth of tactical detail which is remarkable, considering how many pieces have been exchanged. (D)



61

Black to move

Despite Black’s extra pawn White would have good fighting chances here if Black did not have some clever tactical resources at his disposal.

In Diagram 61 Black plays:

1…f3!

First tactical point: if now 2.Rf2 Rxc3! 3.Kxc3 Ne4+ followed by 4…Nxf2 and Black has won a piece.

2.Ra1 f2!

Second tactical point: if now 3.Kd3 Rh5 4.Rh1 Rxh2! 5.Rxh2 f1Q+.

3.Rf1 Nf5+! 4.Kd3 Rxc3+!

The third tactical point: Black will come out a piece ahead.

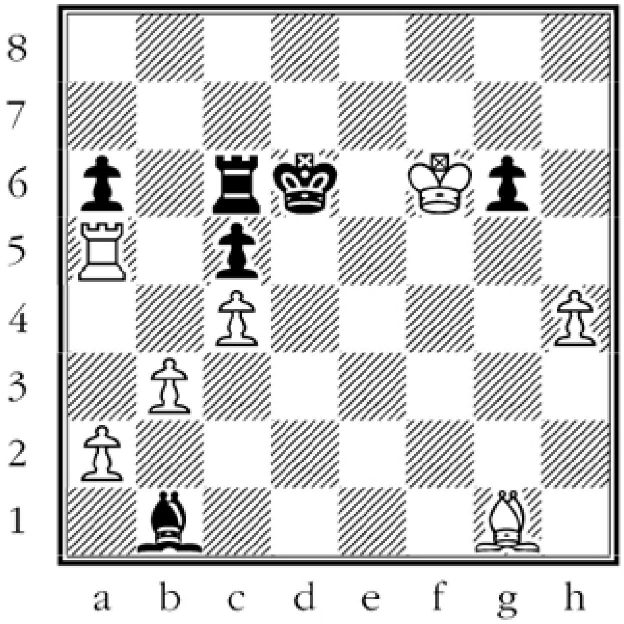
5.Kxc3 Ne3 6.Rxf2 Nd1+

White had no choice.

7.Kd4 Nxf2 8.h4 Ng4 9.Ke4 h6 White resigns.

For if 10.Kf4 Nf6! 11.Ke5 g5! 12.hxg5 hxg5 13.Kf5 g4!. Now White can never capture the knight, for the black pawn will queen. Black first confiscates the remaining white pawn with his king; then he marches the king over to the kingside; finally, he escorts his pawn to the queening square.

In Diagram 62 we are back in the realm of the highly systematic procedure. (D)



62

Black to move

White is a pawn ahead and he has all the remaining black pawns under attack. He also has all the black pieces in uncomfortable defensive positions. In such situations the attacker's problem is: how can I step up the pressure?

White is well prepared for 1…Kc7+, which he will answer with 2.Ke5 Kb6 3.b4! (a beautiful pin!) 3…Bd3 4.Bxc5+ and 5.Kd4.

1…Bd3 2.Bh2+ Kd7+ 3.Ke5

White threatens 4.Bg1 winning the c-pawn.

3…Kc7

And now if 4.Bg1 Kb6 5.b4 Bxc4 (thanks to 1…Bd3).

4.Kd5+ Kb6 5.Rxa6+!

The point of the subtle king maneuvers.

5…Kxa6 6.Kxc6 Bb1 7.Kxc5 Bxa2 8.b4 Kb7

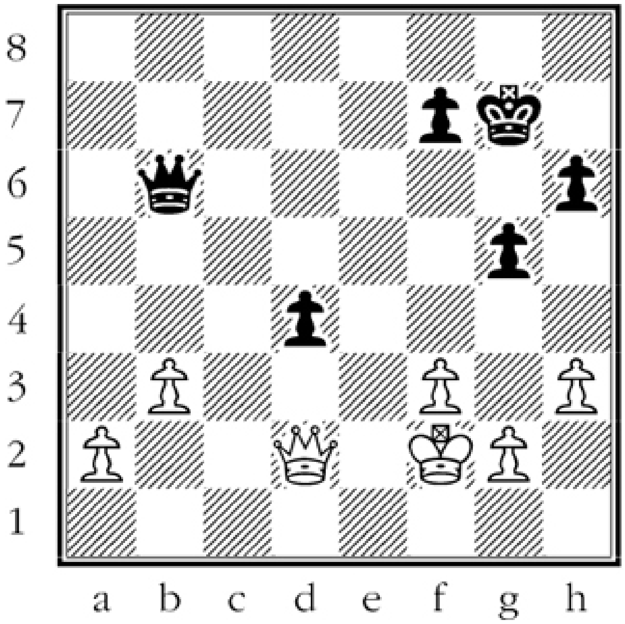
With two pawns ahead, the win is no longer difficult. Note how carefully White avoids the difficulties that later turn up in Diagram 77.

9.b5! Bb1 10.Kb4 Be4 11.c5 Bf3 12.c6+! Ka8 13.Kc5 Bg2 14.b6 Bxc6 15.Kxc6 g5 16.b7+! Black resigns.

For the pawn queens and immediately forces checkmate. (But note that 16.hxg5?? produces stalemate.) **Queen and Pawn Endings**

These endings are proverbially difficult, and exasperating too. The player who is behind in material often has a wealth of checks at his disposal. It takes the greatest patience to survive such a series of checks.

Since we are only interested in the principles underlying the winning process, we shall study two comparatively easy queen and pawn endings. (D)



63

White to move

White is a pawn ahead, but what is more important is that he has two connected passed pawns on the queenside. He means to advance them even if he has to give up several kingside pawns in the process.

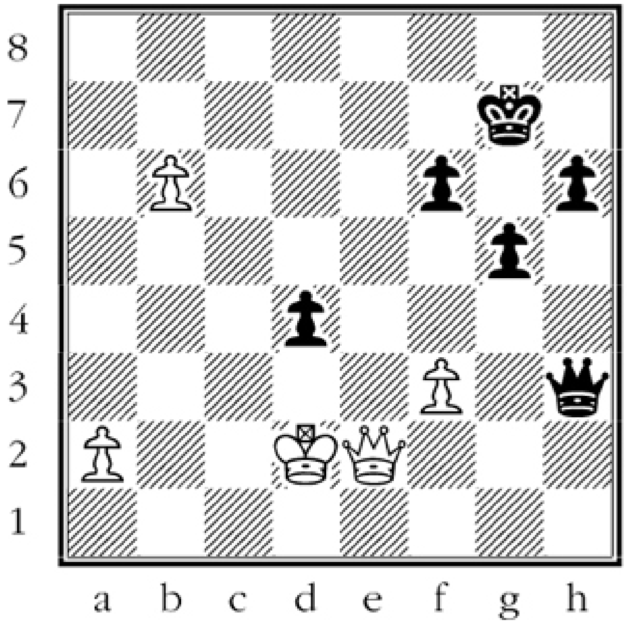
1.Qd3 f6 2.Ke2 Qe6+ 3.Kd2 Qe5 4.b4! Qh2 5.Qe2 Qc7 6.Qd3 Qh2

This is where White decides on the all-out push of the queenside pawns.

7.b5! Qxg2+ 8.Qe2! Qxh3

Black naturally avoids 8…Qxe2+ 9.Kxe2 with a king and pawn ending which is lost for him because of White’s remote passed pawn.

9.b6! (D)



64

Black to move

White’s material plus has actually turned into a minus, but his b-pawn has become very menacing. If now 9…Qc8 10.Qe7+ followed by 11.Qc7! forces the immediate queening of the pawn.

9…Qd7 10.Qc4!

With the winning threat of 11.Qc7: the pin would force the exchange of queens, whereupon the remote passed pawn would decide the outcome at once.

10…Kg6 11.Qc7 Qe6 12.Qc2+! f5 13.Qb3!

Again the sinister motif of the king and pawn ending which is hopeless for Black.

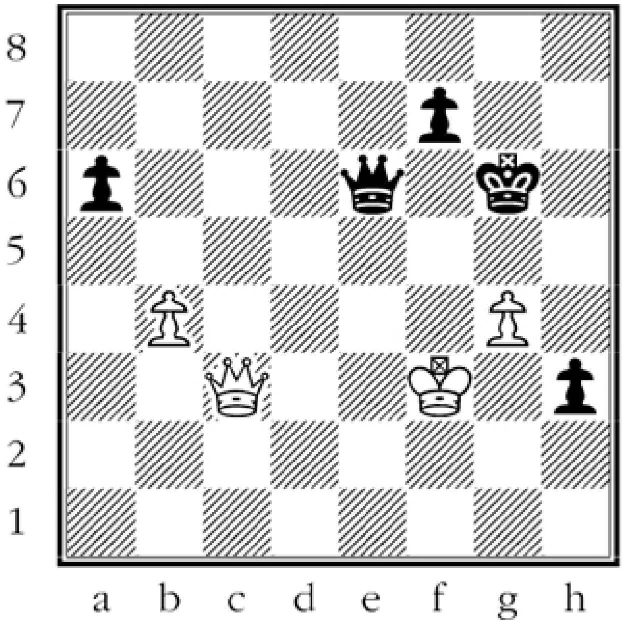
13…Qe5 14.b7 Qb8 15.Kd3 Kf6 16.Qb6+ Ke7 17.Qxh6! Qe5 18.Qh7+! Ke6

An exquisite variation here is 18…Kf8 19.b8Q+! Qxb8 20.Qh8+; Or 18…Kd8 19.Qh8+! Qxh8 20.b8Q+. In either case, White wins the queen by X-ray attack.

19.Qg8+ Ke7 20.b8Q Qe3+ 21.Kc4 Qc3+ 22.Kb5 Black resigns.

With a queen down, Black has no chance.

In Diagram 65 the winning process is equally interesting. (D)



65

Black to move

Black is a pawn ahead and it is clear that his hopes of a win rest on the well-advanced h-pawn. The proper exploitation of this passed pawn again depends on an X-ray attack.

In Diagram 65 Black's winning move is:

1…Qd5+!

If now 2.Kf4 h2! 3.Qc2+ Kg7 and White is lost, for if 4.Qxh2 Qd6+ winning the white queen by an X-ray attack. If 2.Ke3 f6 threatens to win at once with …Qe5+. After White meets this threat, Black advances …Kg5, with a lengthy but assured win in sight.

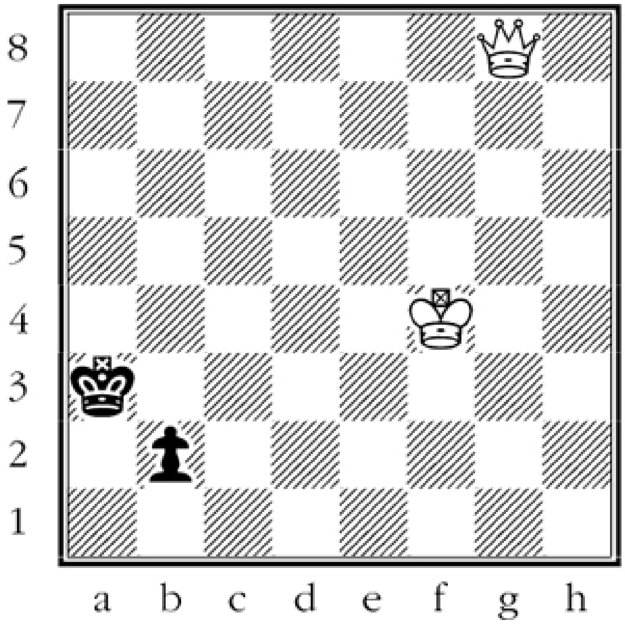
2.Kg3 Qg2+ 3.Kh4 h2 4.Qd3+ Kg7 5.Qd4+ f6!

And now White can resign, for after 6.Qa7+ Kg6! or 6.Qd7+ Kh6! his queen has no more checks.

Queen vs. Pawn

This sounds like child's play, but in this special case it is hard work despite the enormous disparity in material.

White wants to bring his own king to the vicinity of the black king and pawn in order to construct a mating position. (D)

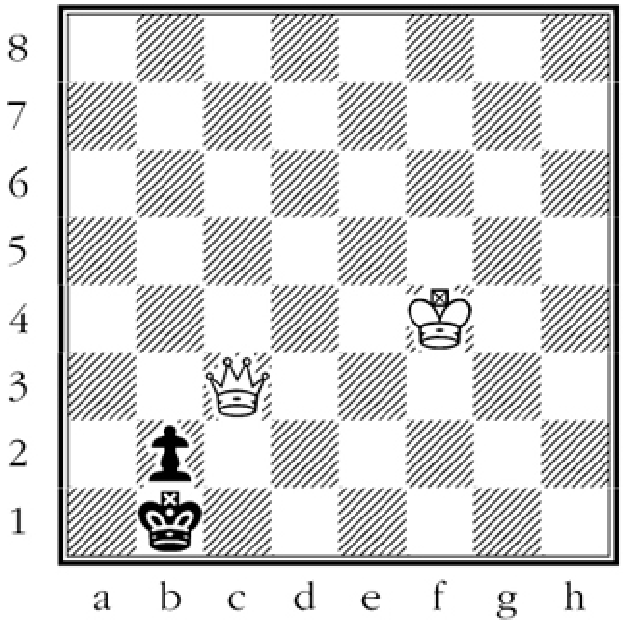


66

White to move

If Black’s pawn were less advanced, White would win easily. As it is, the pawn threatens to queen. Luckily White has an artistic winning method at his disposal.

There is only one way to accomplish this: *to give a series of checks designed to force the black king in front of his pawn!* Here’s how to do it: **1.Qb8 Ka2 2.Qa7+ Kb3 3.Qb6+ Kc2 4.Qc5+ Kd2 5.Qb4+ Kc2 6.Qc4+ Kd2 7.Qb3 Kc1 8.Qc3+ Kb1** (D)



67

White to move

At last White has forced the black king in front of the pawn, so the pawn isn’t threatening to queen. This gives White a breathing spell, enabling him to rush his king to the scene of action.

9.Ke3! Ka2 10.Qc2 Ka1 11.Qa4+ Kb1 12.Ke2!

Another way is 12.Kd3! Kc1 13.Qc2# – but not 12.Kd2?? with an inglorious stalemate.

12…Kc1 13.Qd1#

Chapter Nine

How to Simplify into a Won Ending

Simplifying has two aspects.

The player who is ahead in material wants a placid game without complications, so that he can proceed to make use of his extra material without being disturbed by side issues.

The player who has a material disadvantage naturally avoids simplifying as much as he can, and, just as naturally, seeks complications. The simpler the position, the more assured is his ultimate defeat. Complications, tricks, confusion offer him his best practical chance.

But this is not the only conflict on simplification.

The player who has a material advantage wants to simplify by exchanging *pieces*, particularly the queen. (The queen is the great troublemaker in such situations; its long-range potentialities can often stir up an unwelcome surprise.) However, this same player is opposed to exchanging *pawns.* We noticed this in a number of earlier endings. His opposition is based on two points.

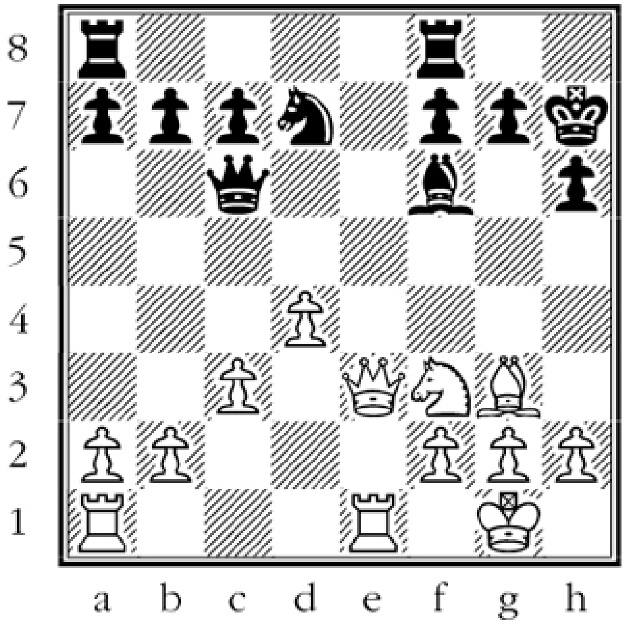
First, he needs pawns as queening candidates. (Just think of Diagram 20 in this respect.) The more pawns he retains, the better his queening chances.

Don’t interpret this point too literally. It does not call for a slavish avoidance of all pawn exchanges; it merely emphasizes the need for caution.

As for the player who is behind in material, he avoids the exchange of pieces if he can, but seeks the exchange of pawns where he can do so.

Removing the Queens

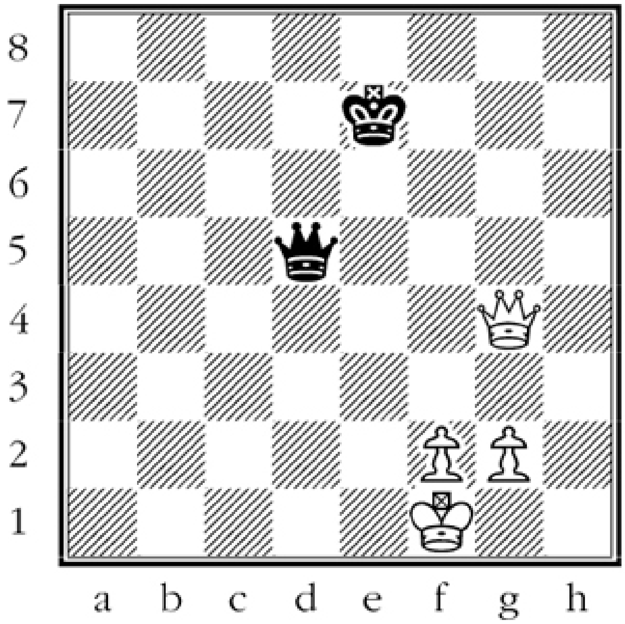
Now let’s see some illustrations of how the exchange of queens is brought about in actual play. (D)



White to move

White is a pawn ahead and is naturally eager to exchange queens. This is accomplished directly by a queen check: 1.Qe4+. Whether Black exchanges or allows White to exchange, the queens disappear.

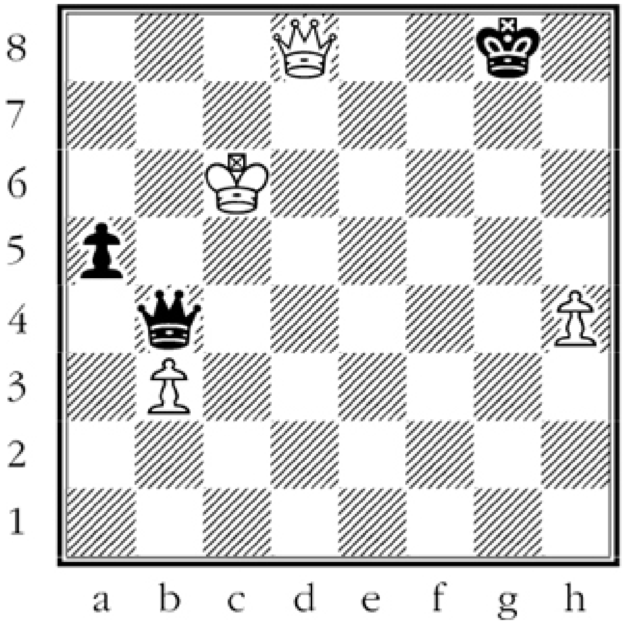
In Diagram 69 a check again has the desired effect. (D)



Black to move

White is two pawns ahead but he must look forward to a long series of checks. Luckily, when Black tries 1…Qb5+ White has 2.Qe2+! forcing a king and pawn ending which is effortlessly won for White.

In Diagram 70 Black's immediate resignation comes as something of a surprise. (D)



70

Black to move

Though White is a pawn ahead, it does not seem possible for him to maintain this advantage or turn it to use. Also, the position is so open that Black's chances of perpetual check are very promising.

Yet Black's resignation is quite in order, as we can see from the following play:

1…Kg7

(or any other king move to the seventh rank.)

2.Qd7+!

If Black's king goes to the sixth rank, then 3.Qd6+! forces the exchange of queens. In that event White's king wins the remaining black pawn and advances his own b-pawn to queen. Meanwhile Black's king is held in a vise by the white h-pawn.

2…Kg8

On 2…Kf8 White has 3.Qd6+! and on 2…Kh8 White wins as in the text.

3.Qc8+! Kf7

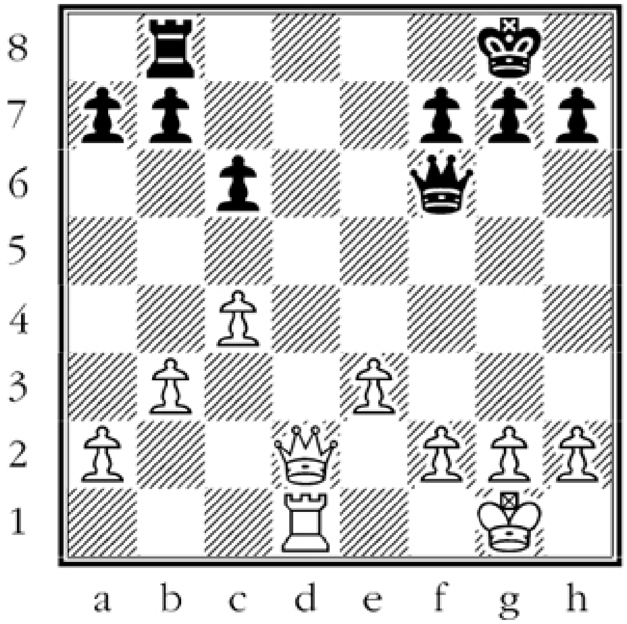
It doesn't matter where the black king goes.

4.Qb7+!

Forcing the easily won king and pawn ending described in the note to White’s second move.

This is a fine example of simplifying technique.

Of course, it isn’t always necessary to have a check available to force a simplified position. Any other kind of strong threat can do the trick. (D)

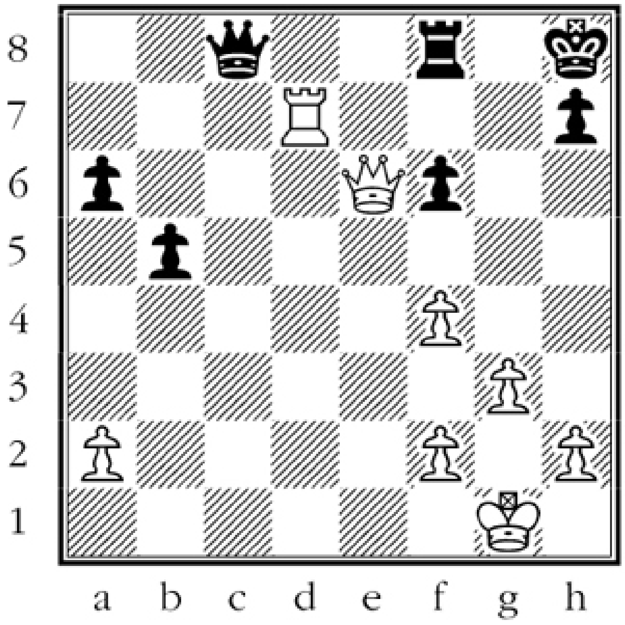


71

White to move

White is a pawn ahead and would therefore like to exchange queens. He doesn’t have a check at his disposal, but 1.Qd6! does equally well. As Black’s rook is threatened, he has nothing better than 1…Qxd6 2.Rxd6. Thus White has achieved his objective.

In Diagram 72, too, White does not have a check but he has an equally effective threat. (D)


72

Black to move

White is a pawn ahead. In addition, he has an overwhelming position, in view of the mating threat Qe7. Thus he forces Black to seek the exchange of queens even though Black is already behind in material.

1…Qc1+

Or 1…Qe8 2.Qxe8 Rxe8 3.Rd6 winning a second pawn for White.

2.Kg2 Qc4 3.Qxc4 bxc4 4.Rc7

Winning a second pawn anyway.

4…Rb8 5.Rxc4 Rb6 6.Rc7 Rb2

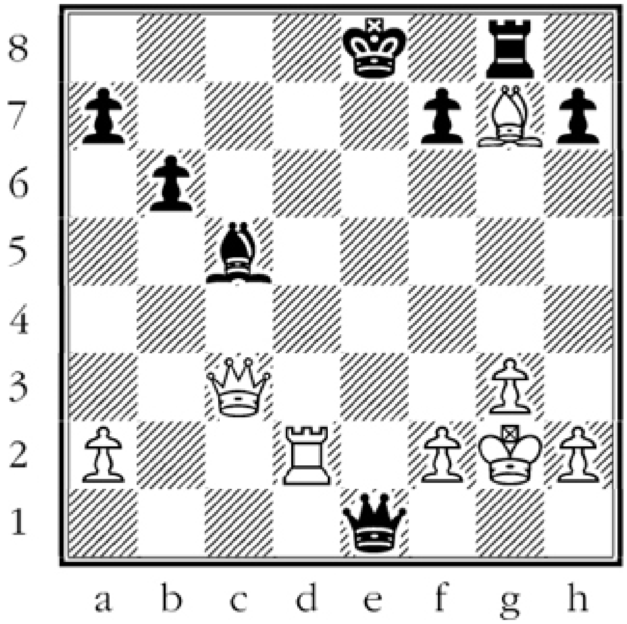
If Black’s rook stays on the sixth rank, White wins by advancing his kingside pawns, escorted by their king.

7.Rc6 Rxa2 8.Rxf6 Kg7 9.Rb6 Ra5 10.g4 Ra4 11.Kg3 Ra3+ 12.f3 a5 13.h4 h6 14.g5 h5 15.f5 Ra1 16.Rb7+ Black resigns.

White’s pawns advance irresistibly.

Other Simplifying Methods

In Diagram 73 we see a whole arsenal of threats used by White to force a favorable ending and then win it. (D)



73

Black to move

Momentarily material is even. However, White has the nasty threat of Rd8+ winning Black’s queen.

1…Rxg7

If Black tries 1…Qe4+ 2.f3 Qe3 3.Bf6!! wins. And if 1…Qe6 2.Qd3! is decisive.

Because of these variations, Black decides to give up the queen.

2.Rd8+! Kxd8 3.Qxe1

The queen is definitely stronger than the rook and bishop. The play that follows is a wonderful example of the power of the queen.

White’s immediate threat is 4.Qe5! attacking the rook. If then 4…Rg6 5.Qh8+ wins a pawn, likewise after 4…Bf8 5.Qb8+. Finally, if 4…Rg8? 5.Qb8+ wins the rook.

3…Rg6 4.Qe4!

Threatening to win the a-pawn with 5.Qa8+ or the h-pawn with 5.Qh4+.

Black must lose one pawn or the other. Which one is he to preserve? The h-pawn, for if he loses it, White gets a *passed pawn* at once. This passed pawn will at once advance – a candidate for queening.

4…h6 5.Qa8+ Ke7 6.Qxa7+ Kf8 7.a4!

A clever move. White threatens 8.a5 when Black’s pawn cannot capture because of the pin. The sequel would be 9.a6, with a dangerous passed pawn that would queen quickly.

7…Bb4 8.Qb8+ Kg7 9.Qe5+ Kg8 10.f4

A good move which undermines the position of Black's rook on the sixth rank because of the possibility of f4-f5.

10…Re6 11.Qb5 Bf8

Note that 11…Bc5? is all wrong because of 12.a5! and 13.a6 with a winning passed pawn.

12.f5 Rd6 13.Kf3!

White brings his king to the queenside. He intends to win the b-pawn.

13…Rd4 14.Ke3!

To exchange pawns by 14.Qxb6 Rxa4 would run counter to the great principle of avoiding pawn exchanges. The capture would make White's victory extremely difficult.

14…Rb4

If instead 14…Bc5 15.Qe8+ Kg7 16.Qe5+ and 17.Qxd4! with an easy win in the king and pawn ending.

15.Qe8 Kg7 16.Kd3 Kg8 17.Kc3

Threatening to force a won king and pawn ending with 18.Qxf8+! Kxf8 19.Kxb4 etc.

17…Rg4

He tries to keep White's king from crossing the fourth rank. Thus, if 17…Rb1 18.Kc4 Rb4+ 19.Kd5 Rb2 20.Kc6 when White keeps the b-pawn under attack and advances his kingside pawns against Black's weakened forces.

18.Qb5 Bc5

The game is reaching the decisive point.

19.Kb3!

Now Black is lost.

Thus if 19…Rb4+ 20.Qxb4 Bxb4 21.Kxb4 with a won king and pawn ending.

And if 19…Bd4 20.f6! (threatening 21.Qe8+ and 22.Qxf7+). After 20…Bxf6 White wins easily because of the passed a-pawn he gets by 21.Qxb6.

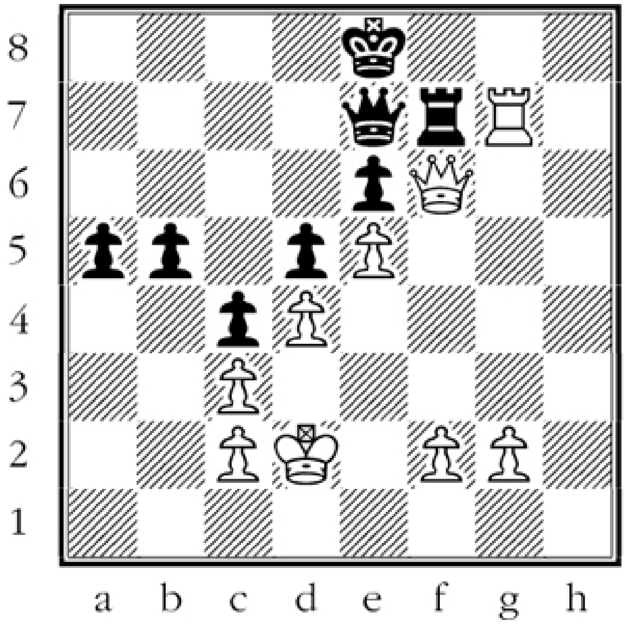
So Black has nothing better than 20…Kh7. But then 21.Qf5+ Rg6 22.Qd7! Bxf6 23.Qxf7+ Bg7 24.Qf5! is decisive.

19…Kg7 20.a5! Black resigns.

For if 20…Rb4+ 21.Qxb4 Bxb4 and now 22.a6! forces the queening of the a-pawn!

A very fine ending, played in masterly style by White.

In Diagram 74 an extremely subtle maneuver wins for White. (D)



74

White to move

The most obvious continuation, since White is a pawn up, is to exchange the queens and rooks. But in that case White cannot win!

If White plays 1.Qxe7+ Kxe7 2.Rxf7+ Kxf7 the simplification turns out to be faulty because White’s king is tied down by Black’s passed a-pawn. The white kingside pawns cannot win by themselves, and thus White is held to a draw.

Yet White can win with a subtle waiting move:

1.Qg6!!

Now Black cannot play 1…Kf8?? because of 2.Rg8#. Nor can he play 1…Qd7?? because of 2.Rg8+ Ke7 3.Qg5+ and mate next move.

Nor can Black play his queen further afield because of the reply Qxe6+.

Therefore Black can only move a pawn.

If he plays 1…a4 then 2.Kc1!. If now 2…a3 White exchanges all the pieces and then plays Kb1-a2, capturing the a-pawn and then winning easily by playing Kb4-c5-d6 etc.

And if Black plays 2…Qa3+ White wins with 3.Kb1! Qe7 4.Ka2 a3 (forced) 5.Qxf7+ etc., again winning the a-pawn.

1…b4 2.cxb4 axb4

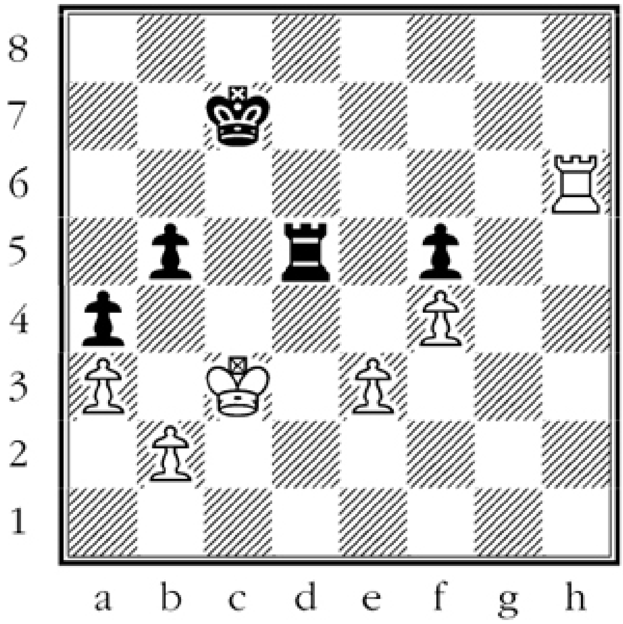
Or 2…Qxb4+ 3.Ke2! Qe7 4.Qxf7+ Qxf7 5.Rxf7 Kxf7 6.Kd2 Kg6 7.Kc3, followed by Kb2-a3-a4xa5 winning easily.

3.Kd1! Black resigns.

Black gives up because if 3…b3 4.cxb3 cxb3 and now White exchanges pieces followed by Kc1-b2xb3.

Or if 3…c3 4.Qxf7+ Qxf7 5.Rxf7 Kxf7 6.Kc1 followed by Kb1-a2-b3xb4. As already shown, White can then liquidate the queenside pawns and bring his king to the kingside to aid the queening of his pawns there.

In Diagram 75 White wins by a series of delightful finesses. (D)



75

White to move

White is a pawn up but he cannot make any headway in the rook and pawn ending. He therefore decides on the maneuver Re6 followed by Re5 forcing a won king and pawn ending.

1.Re6! Kd7 2.Re5! Rxe5 3.fxe5

If now 3…Ke6 4.Kd4 Ke7 5.Kd5 Kd7 6.e6+ Ke7 7.Ke5 followed by 8.Kxf5 and White wins as he pleases.

3…Ke7!

Setting a sly trap. If now 4.Kd4 Ke6! and White cannot win.

For example 5.e4? f4! and Black wins the advanced pawn.

Or if 5.Kc5 Kxe5 6.Kxb5 Ke4 7.Kxa4 Kxe3 8.b4 f4. Both players get new queens and the ending is drawn.

4.Kd3!! Kd7

Now if 4…Ke6 5.Kd4 wins as shown in the note to White’s third move.

5.e4!!

So that if 5…fxe4+ 6.Kxe4 Ke6 7.Kd4 Ke7 8.Kc5 and White gives up his e-pawn to win both black pawns with an easy victory in sight.

5…f4! 6.Ke2!! Ke6

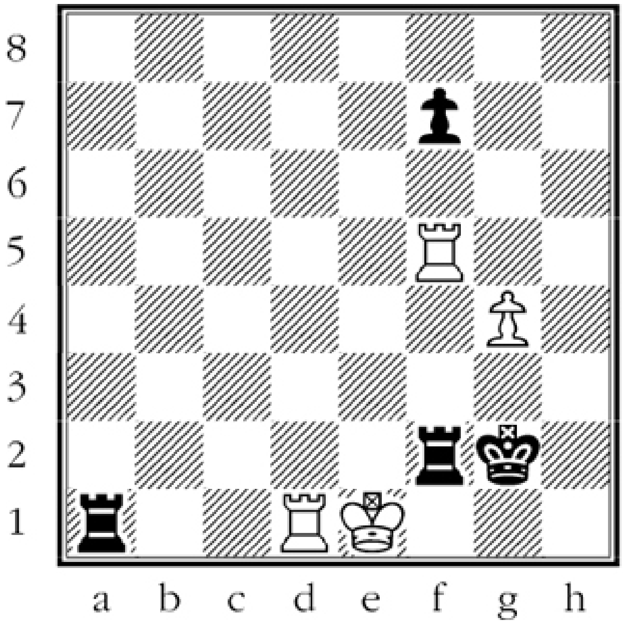
Black's last hope. After the natural reply 7.Kf3?? Kxe5 White loses!

7.Kf2!! Kxe5 8.Kf3 Black resigns.

For he must move his king, allowing 8.Kxf4 with an easy win for White.

An exciting and beautiful ending.

Diagram 76 shows a skillful transition to a won king and pawn ending. (D)



76

Black to move

Material is even, but Black can force a won king and pawn ending.

Black's first move is the key to the win:

1…Rf1+!! 2.Rxf1 Rxd1+ 3.Kxd1 Kxf1 4.Kd2 Kg2

Black now continues, no matter how White plays, with …Kg3, and …Kxg4. This gives him a won king and pawn ending, along the lines of the play from Diagram 28.

So far we have been making use of valuable rules that help us to win when we're ahead in material.

But these rules are not infallible laws: they are only rules of thumb, and they have occasional exceptions.

In the next chapter we shall study the most important of these exceptions.

Chapter Ten

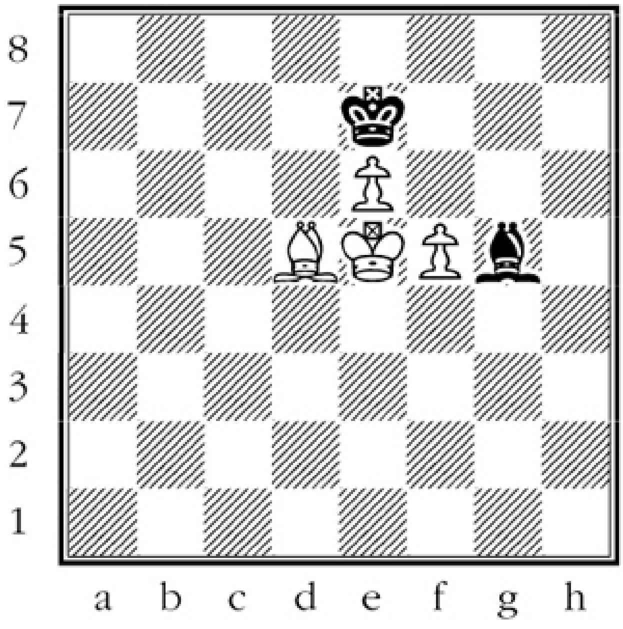
Exceptions: Material Advantage Doesn’t Always Win

When a player has worked hard to create an advantage in material and then finds that it cannot win anyhow, he is keenly disappointed. Psychologically it is a great help to him to be familiar with some of the common instances where material advantage is futile.

Such knowledge is also of great practical value, too. If you are prepared for the danger, you may know how to forestall it.

Bishops on Opposite Colors

We were introduced to this type of ending in Diagram 59. (D)



77

White to move

Though two pawns to the good, White is powerless to win. His difficulty is that he has no command of the dark squares. His pawns cannot advance and his material advantage is an illusion.

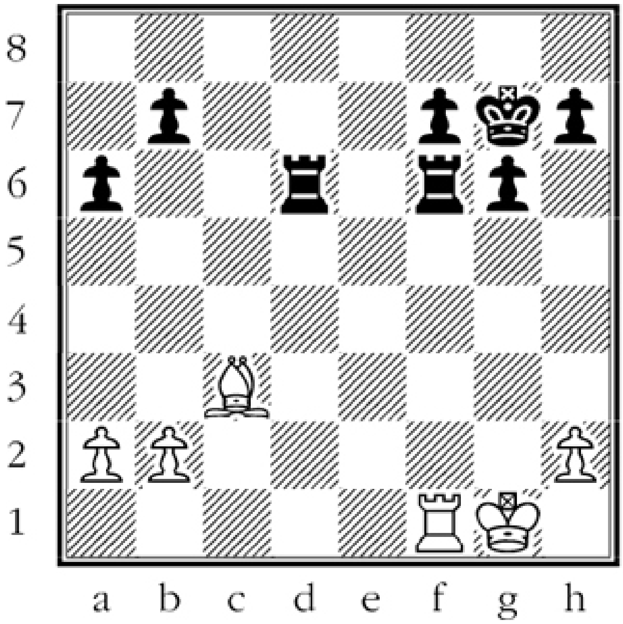
Note this, however: if White’s two pawns were widely separated – say they were an f-pawn and a d-pawn – he would then win. For the defensive forces would be split, with the black king blockading one passed pawn and the bishop holding back the other.

As we already know from the play following Diagram 59 the split defense is bound to fail.

In other words, there is nothing dogmatic about this “exception.” The bishops on opposite colors may draw, or they may not. It all depends on the given position. This explains what is puzzling on the surface – that in Diagram 59, Black, *with one pawn up*, wins; and in Diagram 77, White, *with two pawns up*, cannot win.

Still another “exception to the exception” appears in the bishop and pawn ending following Diagram 62. There White, with two connected passed pawns, controls squares of both colors.

When Material Advantage Loses (D)



78

White to move

White is two pawns and the exchange down, yet he has a forced win! Why? Because the pin reduces Black’s rook on f6 to sheer helplessness.

1.Rxf6 Rxf6 2.h4!

Played to prevent …g6-g5 followed by …Kg6, whereby Black would free himself and actually win.

White must maintain the pin – that is the secret of the winning method.

2…h6 3.Kg2 g5

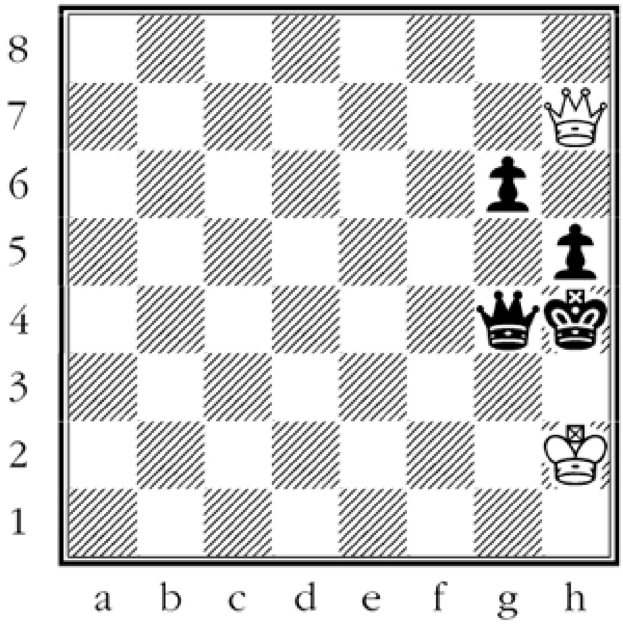
Black hopes for …Kg6.

4.h5! Black resigns.

Why? Black can never free himself from the pin. He must therefore confine himself to pawn moves. Sooner or later he will run out of pawn moves, and he will then have to move his king, losing his rook.

White's pin was so powerful that his bishop was worth more than Black's rook and two pawns!

In Diagram 79 we have another example of *Zugzwang*, a German word describing situations where a player has to lose because it is his turn to move! (D)



79

White to move

This "exception" is really shocking. If Black were a pawn ahead, the position would be a draw. With two pawns up, Black is lost. The reason? His king is in an extraordinary mating net.

1.Qe7+!

To this Black has only one reply, for if 1…g5 2.Qe1+ and mate next move.

1…Qg5 2.Qe4+! Qg4

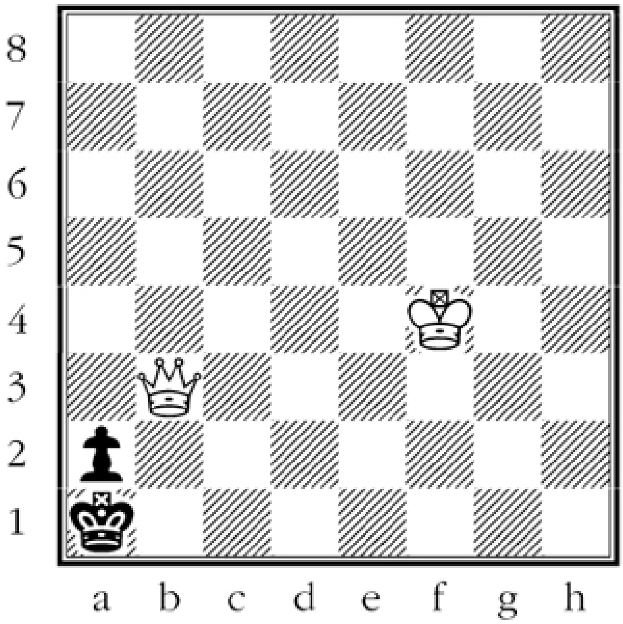
Now comes the move that puts Black in *Zugzwang*:

3.Qe3!! Black resigns.

No matter how Black plays, he is forced into a checkmate position. For example: 3…g5 4.Qe1+ and mate follows; 3…Qg5 4.Qh3#; 3…Qf5 4.Qg3#.

Stalemate, the Greatest "Exception"

Centuries ago, when the stalemate drawing rule was first derived, it was doubtless intended as a punishment for careless or greedy players. Today it is mostly a refuge for desperately ingenious players who manage to find what is sometimes the only way out of an otherwise hopeless situation. (D)



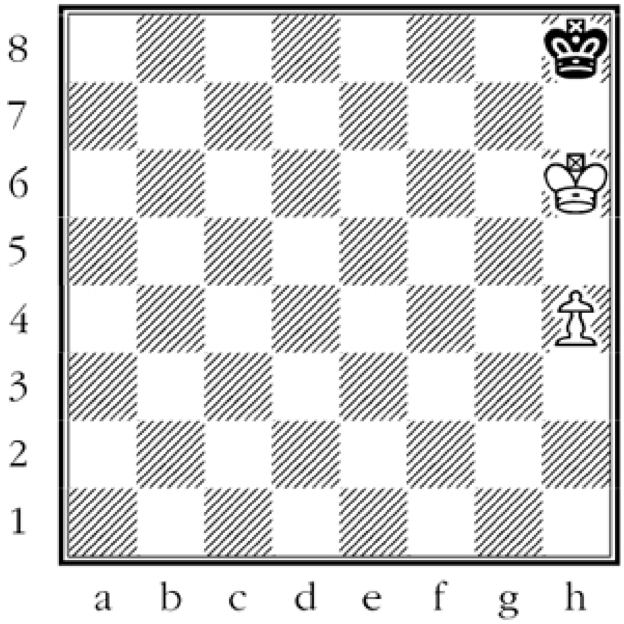
80

White to move

In Diagram 66 we saw how hard White had to work to win with a queen against a mere pawn. In this example, which is even more humiliating, there is no way to win at all!

In Diagram 80 Black’s king is in a stalemate position. If the queen moves off to allow the black king some elbow room, then Black plays …Kb2 and threatens to queen his advanced pawn. The only way that White can then prevent the pawn from queening is to check, whereupon the black king crawls back into the corner.

Verdict: a draw! (D)



81

A drawn position!

Move all the forces one row to the left, and White wins easily (Diagram 28). But on the aand h-files this type of ending is a draw, no matter who moves first.

If White moves first in Diagram 81, the ending can proceed like this:

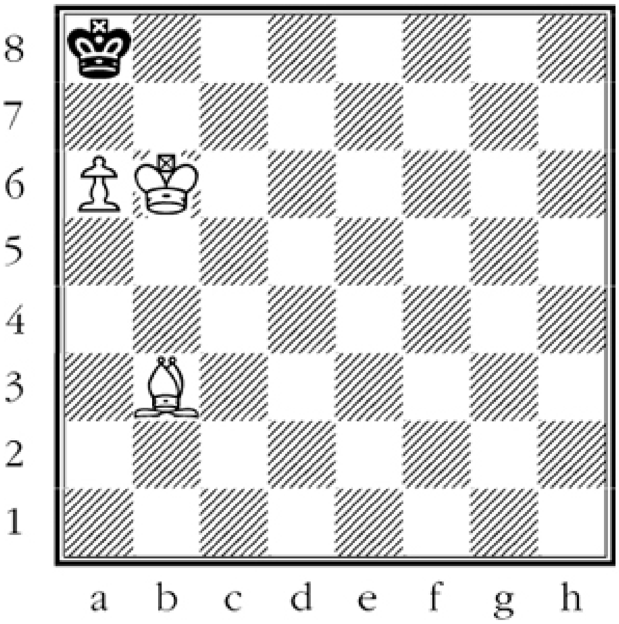
1.h5 Kg8

When Black has a g-, f-, e-, d-, c-, or b-pawn, he merely plays his king one square diagonally forward to the next right-hand file, controlling the queening square and winning with ease.

With an a- or h-pawn this is impossible, because the king and pawn are located at the very edge of the board!

2.Kg6 Kh8 3.h6 Kg8 4.h7+ Kh8 5.Kh6

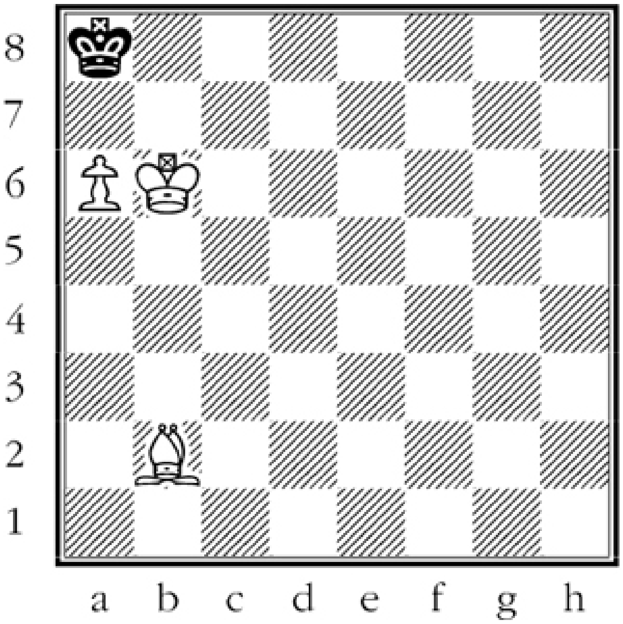
Stalemate! If Black moves first, the result is the same. (D)



82

White to move

With a piece and a pawn to the good, White wins easily: 1.Bd5+ Kb8 2.a7+ Kc8 3.a8Q+ with speedy checkmate in the offing. Yet… Diagram 83 is a draw! (D)



83

White to move

This position is a draw no matter who moves first and what White does.

Can you see any essential difference between Diagram 82 and Diagram 83?

If White plays 1.a7 in the position of Diagram 83, Black is immediately stalemated.

Other maneuvers do no good, for example:

1.Be5.

Again Black is stalemated. Or:

1.Ka5 Ka7 2.Kb5 Ka8 3.Kb6 Kb8 4.Be5+ Ka8!

White is making no headway.

The explanation: in order to win this type of ending with an a- or h-pawn, its queening square must be of the same color as those the bishop travels on.

When the queening square is of the right color (Diagram 82) there is an easy win.

When the queening square is of the wrong color (Diagram 83) the position is a draw.

Caution: this applies only to a- and h-pawns. All other pawns win easily in the analogous situation.

This concludes our survey of the important exceptions to the rule that superior force should win.

Don’t let these exceptions dishearten you. They are, after all, the exceptions and not the rule.

By being familiar with these exceptions you will avoid many a painful surprise. You will also be less likely to succumb to overconfidence; and this brings us to our final chapter.

Chapter Eleven

Beware of Overconfidence!

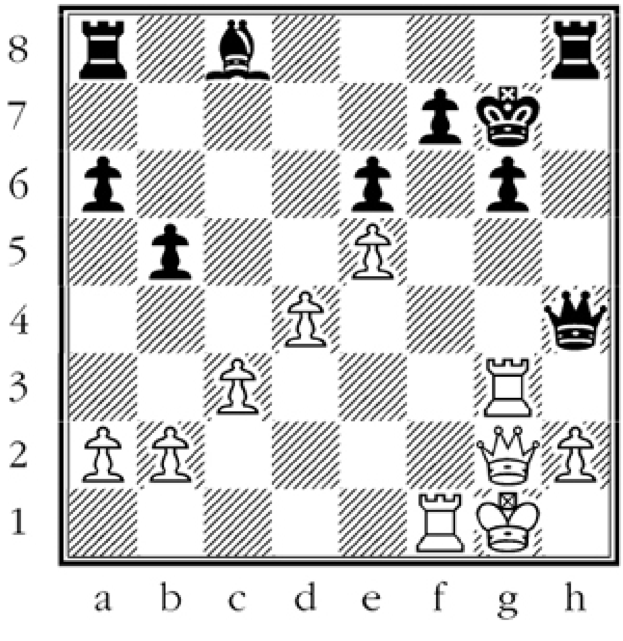
Nothing is so conducive to overconfidence in chess as winning some material from your opponent.

And, by the same token, nothing is so discouraging as losing back that material – or more – through some ill-considered, overconfident move.

Such mistakes, when committed in the opening, may be neutralized later on. A good recovery is even possible after a middlegame mistake. But in the endgame, when the outcome of the game is already in sight, last-minute blunders stemming from overconfidence can be painfully costly.

The Element of Surprise

Overconfidence breeds error when we take for granted that the game will continue on its normal course; when we fail to provide for an unusually powerful resource – a check, a sacrifice, a stalemate. Afterwards the victim may wail, "But who could have dreamt of such an idiotic-looking move?" (D)



84

Black to move

Black is a piece ahead but he is a bit backward in development. He sees that his queen rook cannot be captured because of the reply …Qxh2#. This makes him so overconfident that he distains the careful (and winning) 1…Ra7.

In Diagram 84 Black blunders with:

1…Bb7??

Black relies on 2.Qxb7 Qxh2#. But –

2.Rxf7+!!

The brilliant resource that Black completely overlooked.

2…Kxf7 3.Qxb7+ Qe7

If the king moves, White captures the rook with check and still has time to stop Black's mating threat.

4.Rf3+!

The finesse that really establishes the soundness of the combination.

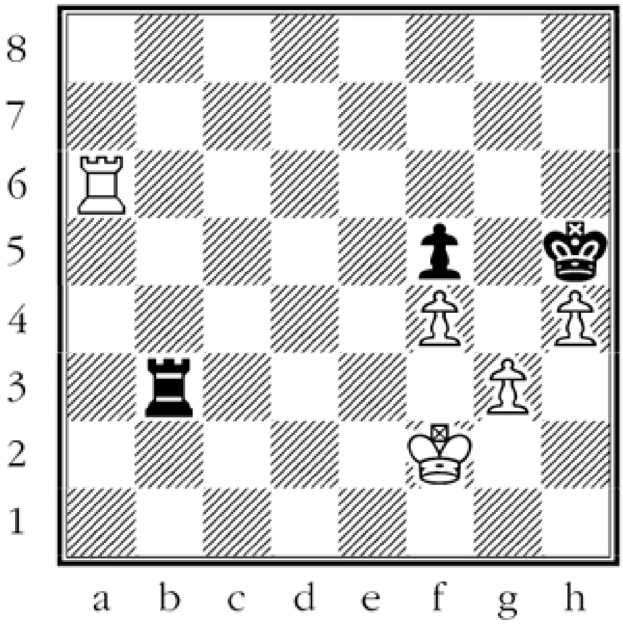
4…Ke8 5.Qxa8+ Qd8 6.Qxd8+ Kxd8 7.Rf6 Ke7 8.Rxg6 Kf7 9.Rg2 Ke8 10.Rg7 Rh3 11.Ra7

Of course White's enormous advantage in material must win easily for him.

Stalemate in Master Play!

This actually happened to one of the greatest living grandmasters; he overlooked an obvious stalemate possibility.

Samuel Reshevsky had the white pieces in this easily won position in the world championship candidate's tournament of 1953. (D)



85

White to move

With two pawns ahead, White should win in due course. His proper play is 1.Ra1, with a slow but sure win in prospect. Instead, he completely overlooks a stalemate!

White’s continuation in Diagram 85 was the thoughtless move:

1.Rf6??

This gives Black the chance of a lifetime:

1…Rf3+!!

Now if 2.Ke2 Rxg3 3.Rxf5+ Kxh4 and Black has an easy draw, as White’s forces are too badly placed to derive any value from the extra pawn.

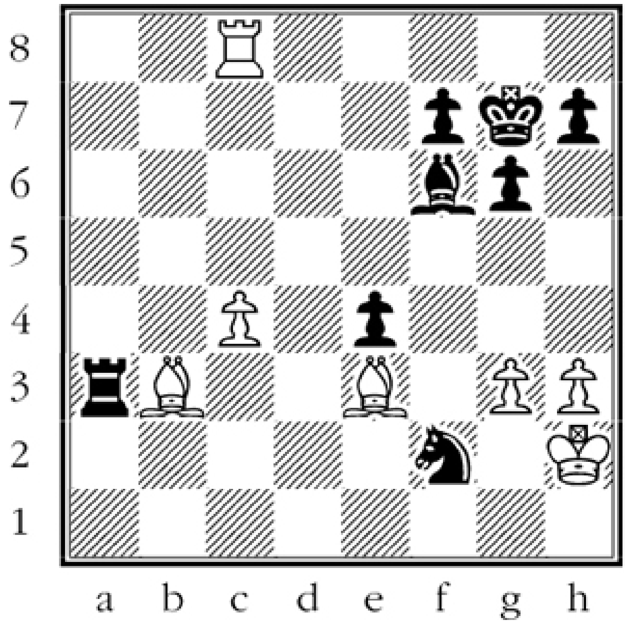
2.Kg2 Rxg3+!! Draw.

If White captures the impudent rook, Black is stalemated. If White proudly refuses to capture the rook, the sequel might be: 3.Kh2 Rh3+!! 4.Kg2 Rg3+!! 5.Kf2 Rh3 with a drawn rook and pawn ending as in the last note.

So White swallows his pride and accepts the draw at once.

He Who Laughs Last

With a pawn ahead, Black was indulging in rather breezy counterplay which eventually led to the position of Diagram 86. (D)



86

White to move

White attacks the knight, but his light-square bishop is pinned. If White plays 1.Bxf2, Black replies 1…Rxb3. However, Black has missed a surprise mating threat.

In Diagram 86 White suddenly unleashes a mating threat.

1.Bc5!!

Attacks Black’s rook and also threatens 2.Bf8+ Kg8 3.Bh6+ and mate next move.

1…Be7

Black manages to lose “only” the exchange; but of course this is enough to lose the game.

2.Bxa3 Bxa3 3.c5! e3 4.c6! Ne4 5.Re8 f5 6.Bc4 Bd6 7.c7!

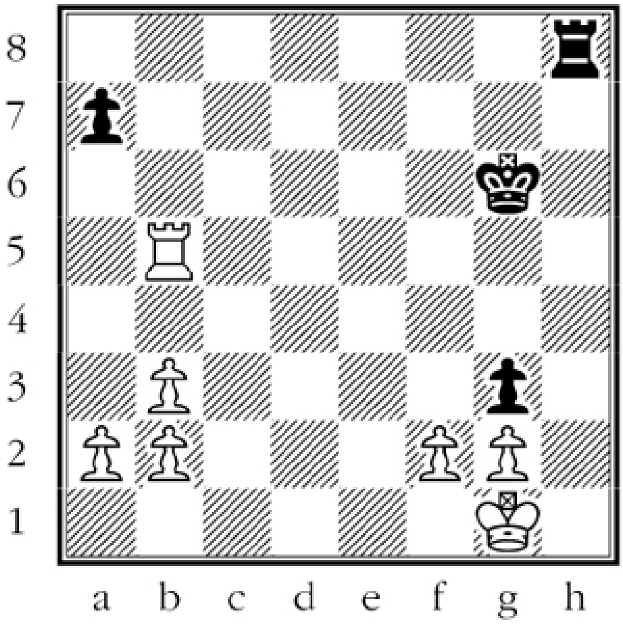
It doesn’t matter what Black does. The passed c-pawn will cost him a piece.

7…Bxg3+ 8.Kg2 Bxc7 9.Re7+ Kf6 10.Rxc7 f4 11.Kf3 Black resigns.

With a rook ahead White wins as he pleases.

All’s Well that Ends Well

But dwelling on the blunders of overconfidence would be a sorry note on which to end this book. So, let’s take a last look at a situation in which the prospective winner has become too confident, and yet manages to make a masterly recovery before it’s too late. (D)



87

Black to move

With three pawns to the good, White is understandably lighthearted in this situation. Black’s fantastic reply soon shatters this over-confident mood.

1…Rh1+?! 2.Kxh1 gxf2

Neither White's king nor his rook, so it seems, can stop the black pawn from queening.

Nevertheless, White can save the game. To Black's surprise-by-violence he has an even more effective surprise-by-violence.

3.Rf5!! Kxf5 4.g4+!! Kxg4

Now White is ready for the saving move:

5.Kg2 Black resigns.

For White disposes of the dangerous pawn and then wins on the queenside.

And so White has triumphantly vindicated the thesis of the book: superior force should win!

Book Six

How to Fight Back

Chapter One

Counterattack – How to Meet the Crisis

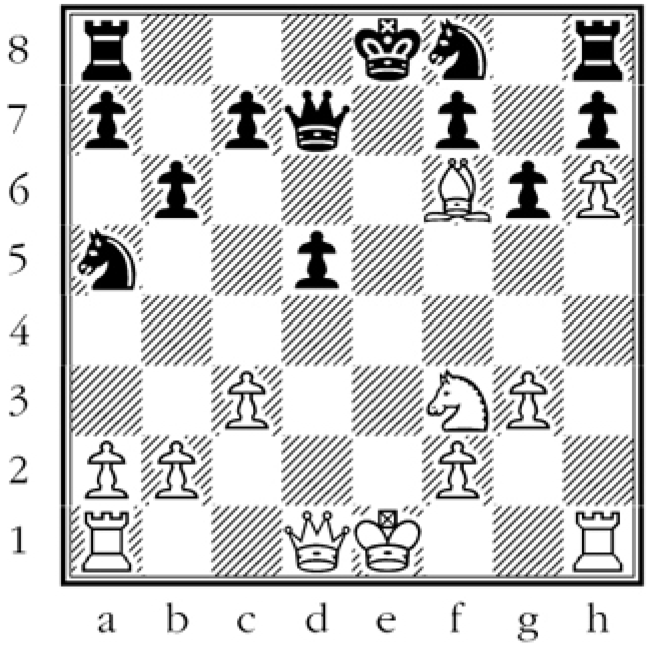
Not so long ago I read a magazine article about a baseball manager who is famous for his fighting spirit and aggressiveness. I was not surprised to learn that this manager has no equal when it comes to bellowing at an umpire. But, when his team falls behind, this manager "seems to lose interest."

So it is with us chessplayers. *We attack because we like to; we defend because we have to.* We tend to do badly the things we dislike. And, since we dislike to defend, we defend miserably. Thus we lose many games which we might have won.

Have you ever stopped to think that attacking ability plays a big role in defensive play? Forget about the common assumption that defending means passive maneuvers, patient crawling, endless dread of the decisive blow.

There are many times when you can smash your opponent's attack with one vigorous thrust. If you size up your resources accurately, you can seize the attack for yourself. In other words, play the defense in an aggressive mood. Here's how: **Look for Counterplay**

Let's look at some actual examples to see the far-reaching difference between active and passive defense. In Diagram 1, for instance, passive play will never do: (D)



Black to move

At first sight it seems that Black can win a piece by the double attack …Qe6+.

White’s bishop is attacking Black’s king rook. Black can simply save the rook with …Rg8. Instead, he tries:

1…Qe6+

Now if White tries to save his menaced bishop by 2.Be5 (passive defense), he loses his bishop after 2…f6.

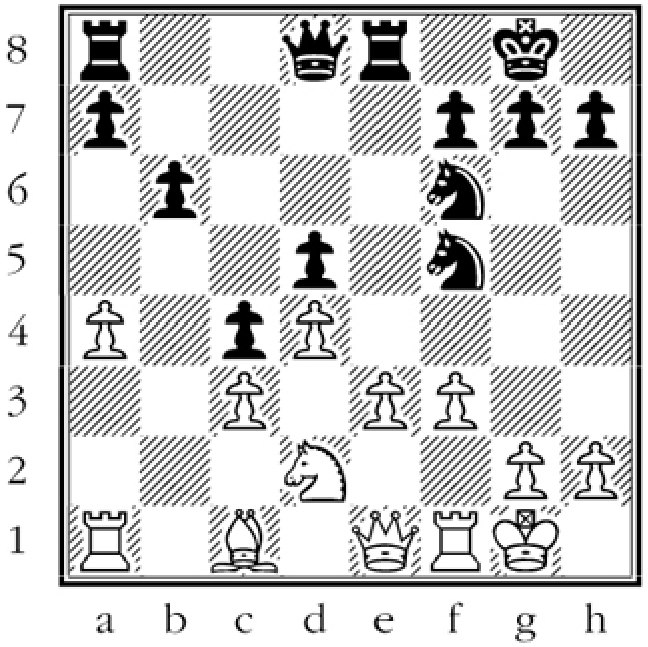
White must find counterplay – *active* defense! Therefore:

2.Qe2!

By interposing his queen, White has pinned the black queen, and has thus saved his bishop.

This was a very clean-cut example, in which White was confronted with a stark decision. He *had* to find the right move; otherwise his bishop would be lost at once.

But sometimes the crisis, though real, is not so obvious to us. In such cases we tend to take it easy, thereby drifting into a lost game. Diagram 2 illustrates this possibility. (D)



White to move

White wants to save his attacked e-pawn, and at the same time get a powerful pawn center, with 1.e4. Is this plan good or bad?

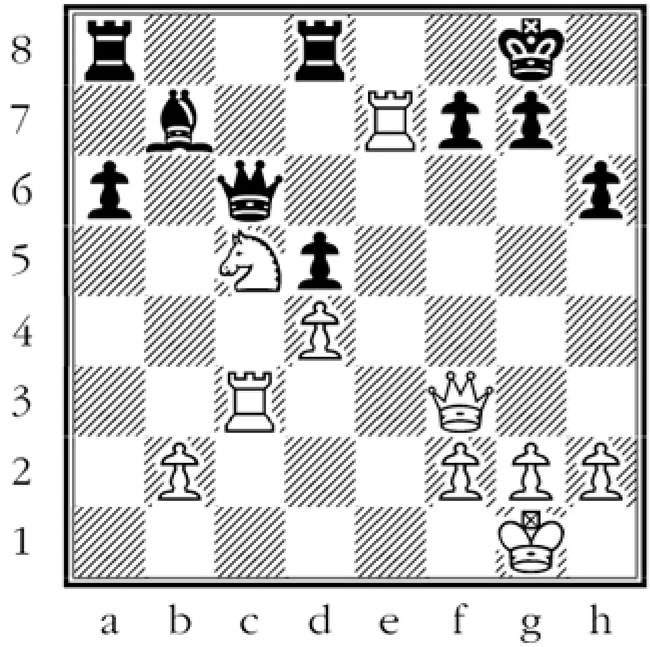
White plays the move that looks logical:

1.e4 dxe4 2.fxe4

Now Black has to look sharp. If he plays the dull 2…Ne7, he has a hopeless position after 3.e5 Nfd5 4.Ne4. In that event, White has a magnificent attacking position, with his open f-file, his powerfully centralized knight, and his queen and bishop poised for action on the kingside. (Even his queen rook can be switched quickly to the kingside by means of Ra2 followed by Raf2.) So here is the crisis. Black can play listlessly, falling into a helpless defensive position – or, he can strike out boldly at the one weakness in White's position. Namely: **2…Nxd4!**

This wins a pawn and destroys White's mighty pawn center and his beautiful attacking position. For if now 3.cxd4 Qxd4+ winning White's queen rook! Vigorous counterplay solved Black's problem.

In Diagram 3 we come to a situation where the crisis is drastic and immediate. Black's position is threatened so strongly that he seems quite lost: (D)



3

Black to move

White threatens Qxf7+ followed by Qxg7#. He also threatens to win a piece by …Rxb7 or …Nxb7. Can Black hold the position?

Most players would see no way for Black to save himself in this predicament. And yet there is a way out – if only Black is determined!

His problem is this: how can he parry the mate threat without losing the bishop? If there is a way, it must be based on a *counterthreat* – a threat of mate, for example. And Black finds the resource he needs: **1…Qg6!**

This defends against White's mate threat of Qxf7+ etc.

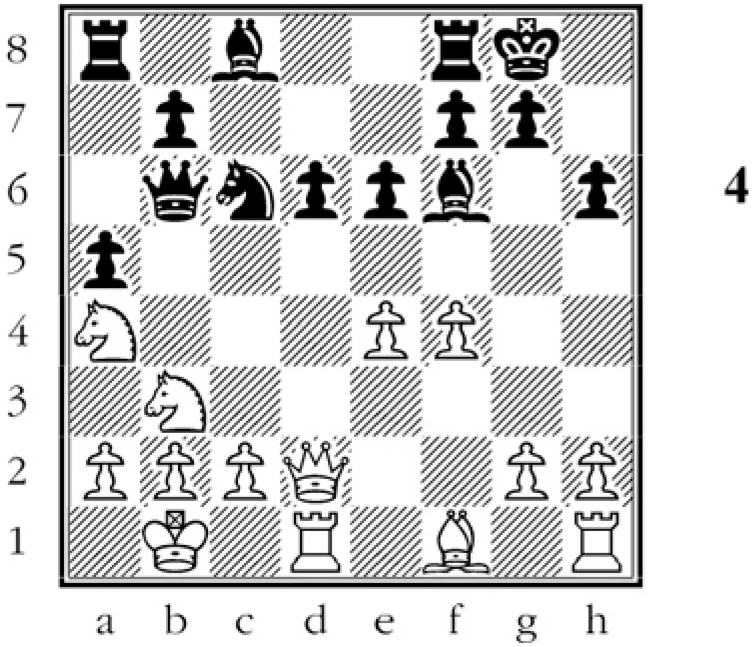
At the same time Black indirectly defends his bishop by threatening …Qb1+ followed by checkmate on the back rank. In other words, White must now stop to prevent this checkmate, giving Black the time to salvage his bishop.

Thus you see how Black, by his alert counterplay, saved a position which many players would have dismissed as hopeless.

Find the Hidden Flaw

The first step toward becoming a skilful defensive player, then, is to handle the defense in an aggressive spirit. If you do that, you can find subtle defensive resources that other players would not dream of. By seeking active counterplay, you will often upset clever attacking lines. Better yet, you will upset your opponent.

Diagram 4 offers a good example of such a refutation: (D)



Black to move

Black's queen is attacked; so is his d-pawn. Naturally he will save his queen. Does that mean his d-pawn is lost?

No doubt of it – this is a difficult situation for Black. If he saves the queen by 1…Qc7, then White simply continues 2.Qxd6 with a pawn to the good.

Or if Black tries 1…Qb4, White has 2.Qxb4 axb4 3.Nb6 Rb8 4.Nxc8 Rfxc8 followed by 5.Rxd6 and again White has won a pawn, leaving Black without compensation.

Must White win a pawn – or is there some sly, hidden resource for Black? There is, if Black is alert enough to search for it. Here it is: **1…Qc7 2.Qxd6**

Now comes a stinging surprise:

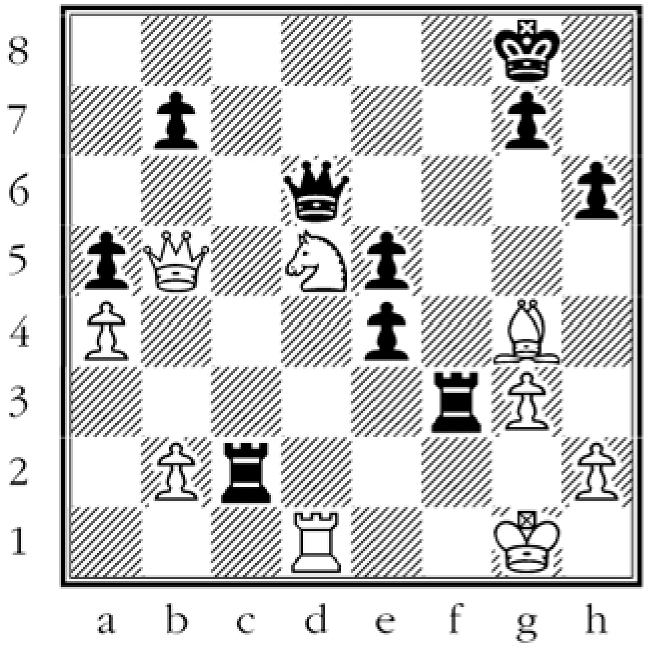
2…Rd8!!

Giving away the queen?

3.Qxc7 Rxd1+ 4.Nc1 Bd8!!

The beautiful point of Black's exceptionally clever play. White's queen is trapped, and White has nothing better than to give up the queen for a minor piece. In that case, Black will have a rook for a minor piece and pawn. This advantage of “the exchange” will assure Black victory in the endgame.

Black’s play in Diagram 4 was remarkably fine. But the way White fights back in the position of Diagram 5 is even more fascinating, especially from a sporting point of view. Here White evolved his defense in a very difficult position, with all the spectators certain that Black was building up a brilliant winning position. (D)



5

Black to move

Materially the position is about even, as Black has a rook and two pawns for two minor pieces. Positionally, however, Black has a very strong game with one of his rooks on the second rank.

The powerful position of one of Black’s rooks on the second rank gives Black formidable mating threats. The situation is all the more difficult for White because his forces are scattered, and his queen is unable to get back to the kingside. (Note, for example, that Qf1 or Qe2 are impossible.) Well aware of the strength of his position, Black tries to achieve a decision on the kingside. He starts with:

1…Qf8

This looks terrifying, as Black threatens 2…Rxg3+!. If then 3.hxg3 Qf2+ and mate next move. If instead 3.Kh1 Rxh2+! 4.Kxh2 Qf2+ forces mate.

How is White to defend? If he tries passive play with 2.Rf1, Black has 2…Rxf1+ 3.Qxf1 Qc5+ winning White's knight. That would leave Black with two pawns and the exchange ahead – an easy win for him.

So White does the best he can:

2.Bxf3 Qxf3

Apparently Black has calculated beautifully. He threatens 3…Qg2#.

If White tries 3.Qf1 – this seems the only defense – there follows 3…Rg2+! 4.Qxg2 Qxd1+ followed by 5…Qxd5. With two pawns ahead, Black would have an easy win in the queen and pawn ending.

So there you see White's predicament – either he gets mated (immediate death), or he loses the ending (slow death, with torture). Or…is there some way out for White? There is – and what a way!

3.Nf6+!! Black resigns!!

Black resigns although he's on the point of administering checkmate! Why?

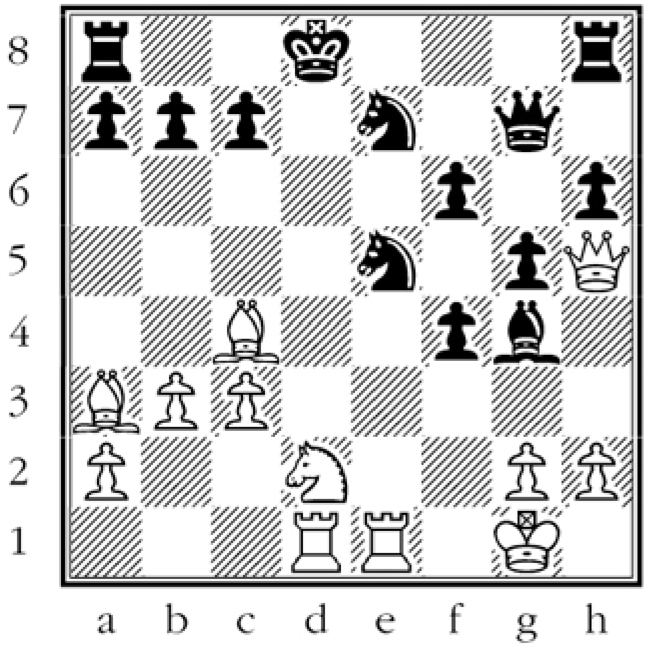
In the first place, if Black plays 3…gxf6 he allows White to snatch the attack: 4.Qe8+ Kg7 5.Rd7#. Bravo!

And if Black plays 3…Qxf6, White has 4.Qb3+ winning Black's rook and coming out a rook ahead.

Finally, if Black tries 3…Kf7 (or 3…Kh8 4.Qe8#), White has a neat checkmate with 4.Qe8+! Kxf6 5.Rd6+ Kg5 6.Qg6#!.

Admittedly, White's resource was not easy to see. And why? Because few players, threatened with mate on the move, would have the imaginative daring to try to fight their way out – *to hit back,* instead of being resigned to a hopeless endgame.

In Diagram 6 you can see the same point illustrated even more forcefully. White's pieces are beautifully posted – and yet his queen is lost! What would you do in such a position – would you resign, or would you look for some way out? (D)



6

White to move

White’s queen is lost. How should he proceed? Is his game hopeless, or does he have some subtle, deeply hidden resource that wins for him?

There is a clue to White’s procedure in this fact: Black’s king has a very shaky position, right in the middle of the board and facing White’s businesslike rook on the d-file.

Well, what then? Suppose White gives a discovered check:

1.Nf3+ Kc8

As it happens, Black can hold out longer with 1…Bd7. But why play this chicken-hearted interposition when he can win White’s queen?

So, here we have a critical position. What can White do to make up for the threatened loss of his queen? Is there any resource which offers the slightest hope in this desperate situation?

2.Nxe5!!

If now 2…fxe5 3.Qxg4+ and White’s queen is safe, with a piece to the good. But Black is relentless:

2…Bxh5

What now?

Well, White has a check. Let’s try it:

3.Be6+ Kb8

And now another check:

4.Nd7+ Kc8

Wonderful! White has a perpetual check by moving his knight back and forth. His faith in the strength of his position has been justified.

But wait… this is a dangerous moment. What a pity if White, in a moment of relief because he's managed to save the game, misses the fact *that he has a forced checkmate!* This is how: **5.Nf8+! Kb8 6.Rd8+ Nc8 7.Rxc8#**

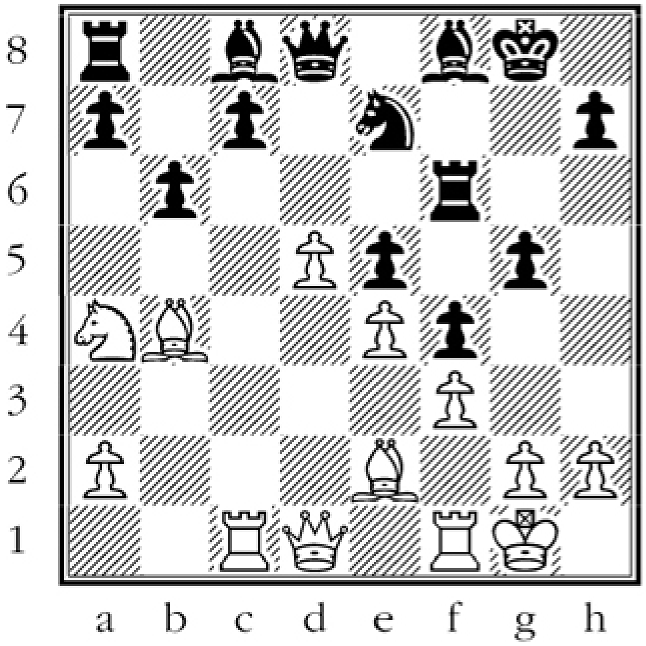
White's uphill struggle was very rewarding. It takes a lot of courage to fight on in a situation where the queen is irretrievably lost.

But note this, which is typical: instead of giving way to despair, White calmly sized up the position and made the best possible use of the factors favoring him. In this case it was the splendid attacking position of his pieces poised to smite the black king that gave White the all-important hint.

One point that's rather puzzling: how was White able to unleash such a powerful attack without having the services of his queen? The answer is partly, as we've seen, that Black's king was badly exposed to attack. But this isn't the whole answer. The other vital element was the fact that *Black's queen was not in a position to aid the defense.*

And so it turned out that White's loss of the queen was minor – but only because he hit back immediately, with all the forces at his command.

In the position of Diagram 7, on the other hand, everything is deceptively serene. Black is a pawn ahead, and while his pieces are somewhat awkwardly placed, he seems to have no reason to worry. (D)



7

White to move

Black is all set to answer an astonishing sacrifice with an even more astonishing reply.

White has deliberately headed for this position, as he has a very powerful-looking move which seems to give him an overwhelming advantage: **1.Rxc7?**

Black's first reaction might well be one of terror as he considers the consequences of 1…Qxc7? 2.d6.

The fight against White's formidable passed d-pawn seems hopeless, for example:

If 2…Qb7 3.dxe7 Bxe7 4.Bxe7 Qxe7 5.Qd5+ winning Black's queen rook.

Or if 2…Qd8 3.dxe7 Bxe7 4.Bxe7 winning the same way.

The same motif appears after 2…Qc6 3.dxe7 Bg7 4.Qd5+! Qxd5 5.e8Q+ and wins. Black, in despair, might try 2…Rxd6 3.Bxd6. But then White wins back his pawn and remains with a vastly superior position.

This is a very useful position to study; it is in just such situations that a player, confronted with several unattractive possibilities, loses his head completely. The strain proves too much for the player who is on the defensive.

But in this case Black plays with admirable poise, unleashing a counterattack which leaves White with a lost game.

1…Nf5!!

A magnificent move, which to begin with takes the sting out of White's contemplated d5-d6.

In addition, look at Black's threats: 2…Qxc7 or 2…Bxb4 or 2…Ne3. His keen, alert countermove has snatched the initiative from White.

If White tries 2.Rxc8 Rxc8 3.exf5, then 3…Bxb4 leaves Black the exchange ahead.

Or if 3.Bxf8 then Black has a crushing reply in 3…Ne3.

White tries a different way, but Black still remains with a winning game.

2.Bxf8 Qxc7 3.Ba3 Ne3 4.Qc1

Now Black has two ways to proceed. He can play 4…Qd7 attacking White's knight and thus winning a second exchange. Or he can play 4…Qg7, with the idea of playing for a kingside attack.

Actually Black made the second choice, but this no longer concerns us here. What interests us is that Black, confronted by a stern challenge, met the crisis with a superb countermove that turned the game in his favor.

So there you have the moral of this chapter. Beware of passive defense that may force you into a straitjacket position. Look for defensive moves that are active and aggressive. Don’t be satisfied merely with moves that blunt the hostile attack. Look for moves that enable you to take the attack into your own hands. The examples in this chapter show you how it’s done.

Chapter Two

Resourceful Defense – How to Simplify

No sooner have I convinced you of the value of *active* defense than I must add a word of caution.

Alert, aggressive defense is fine, but it isn't always possible. What do you do when it isn't possible? Do you just allow the attack to overwhelm you? Do you give up hope, resigning yourself to the inevitable? Or do you look for some resource against your opponent's attack?

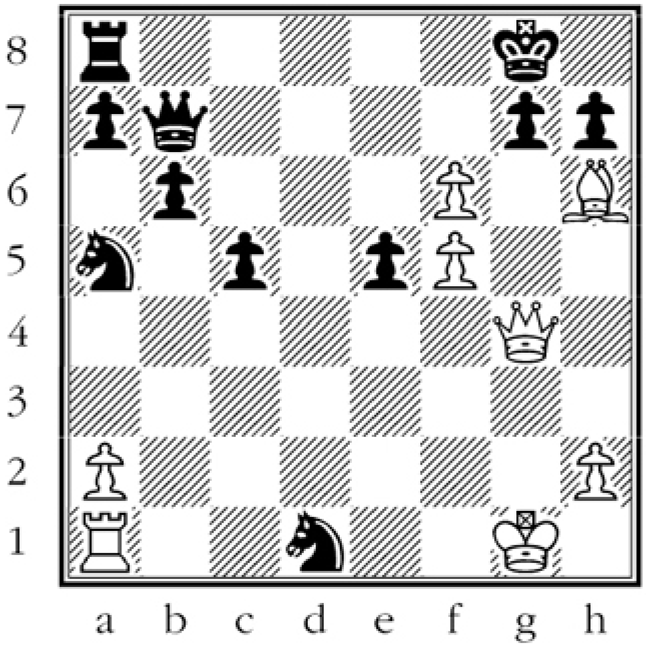
Simplify!

Few of us realize that one of the best weapons against an attack is to play for an exchange of pieces. An attack flourishes on complications, on the efforts of powerfully posted pieces aimed at cramped positions.

Every time you simplify, you remove a hostile piece that might have done a great deal of damage. You're also removing a unit of your own that might have been idle or useless. But above all, you're whittling down the force of your opponent's attack; *you're reducing the danger to which you're exposed.*

And remember this: if you're ahead in material, simplifying is even more useful to you. For you not only smother the attack, you also bring the game to the ending stage where you can make the best use of your extra material.

To see how quickly simplifying puts an end to an attack, let's study some particularly effective examples. (D)



8

Black to move

Black is well ahead in material, but his position is uncomfortable. What is his most forcing line?

In Diagram 8 Black breaks the force of the attack once and for all by playing:

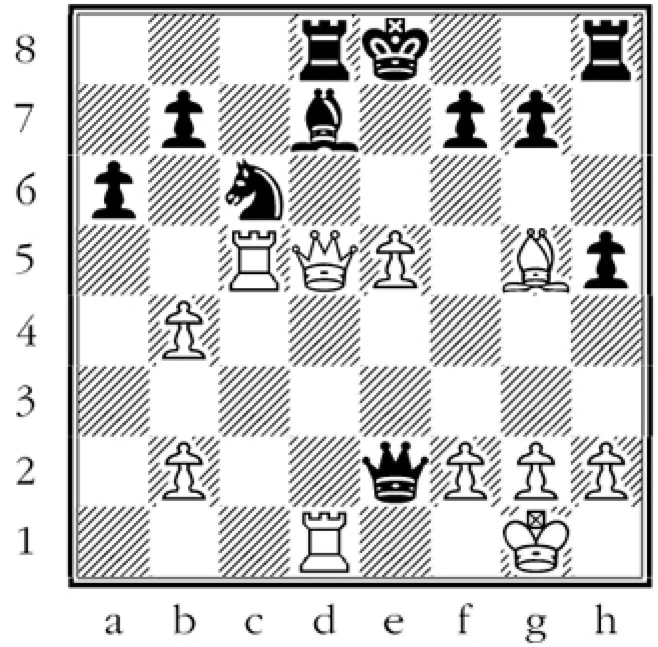
1…Qh1+!

This neat resource leaves White no choice.

2.Kxh1 Nf2+

And Black continues with 3…Nxg4. With the queens gone, Black has nothing to fear. He wins easily, thanks to his extra material.

The situation in Diagram 9 is much more puzzling. Black has a piece for a pawn, but one of his rooks is attacked and cannot move. But this attacked rook is the key to his defensive position, guarding his attacked bishop! In short, Black has a baffling problem. How is he to solve it? (D)



9

Black to move

In this difficult defensive situation, Black can easily go wrong. For example, if 1…Be6?? 2.Qxd8+! Nxd8 3.Rxd8#.

Should Black try 1…Ne7 the sequel might be 2.Qd6 Nf5 3.Qxd7+! Rxd7 4. Rc8+ and mate next move.

Or 2.Qd6 Nc8 3.Rxc8! and wins.

For such picayune defensive tries, we can only comment pityingly, “Black isn’t using his head.”

No, such uninspired moves will never do. The right way is a drastic simplifying move:

1…Qxd1+!!

This breaks the attack.

2.Qxd1 Bg4!!

Splendid play.

If now 3.Bxd8 Bxd1 and Black is a piece ahead with an easy game.

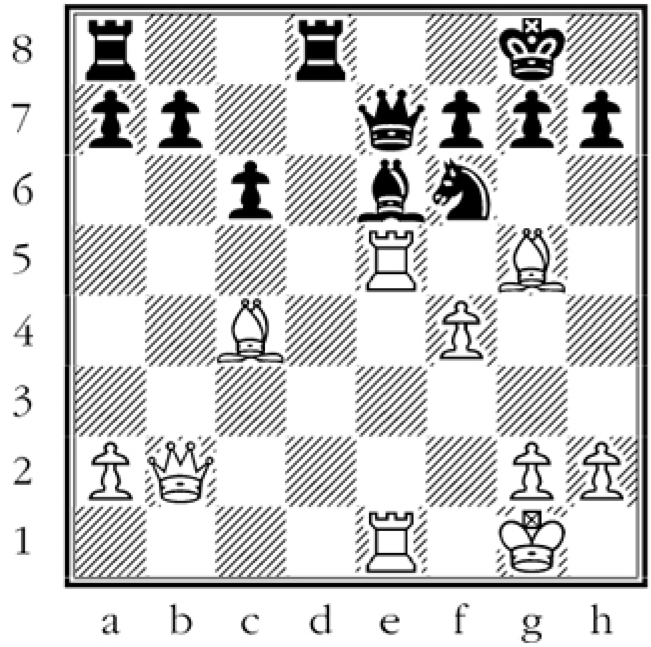
Or 3.Qxd8+ Nxd8 with the same result.

Or 3.Qxg4 hxg4 4.Bxd8 Kxd8 – again with the same result.

In each case Black has a clear win with his extra material. And he has smashed White’s attack.

How to Prepare Simplification

Though simplifying may be desirable in certain positions, it may sometimes require some preparation. This is the case, for example, in Diagram 10. (D)



10

Black to move

Though two pawns ahead, Black is in difficulties. How can he steer into a favorable endgame?

Black is subjected to a double pin, and in addition he must guard against the menace of f4-f5. The fact that he is two pawns ahead indicates the course he should adopt.

It's well worthwhile giving up one of his extra pawns if he can thereby simplify the position. In that way he will no longer be subjected to attack; and, what is equally desirable, he will be able to win the endgame with his extra remaining pawn.

Black's course is therefore clear:

1…Qc7!

Black unpins his bishop. He thereby threatens …Bxc4 – not to mention …Qb6+ forcing the exchange of queens.

2.Bxe6 fxe6

See how nicely Black's plans have developed. If now 3.Rxe6 Qb6+ 4.Qxb6 axb6 5.Bxf6 gxf6 6.Rxf6 Rxa2 and Black wins the endgame with his extra pawn.

3.R1e3

Momentarily preventing the exchange of queens as …Qb6 will not be a check.

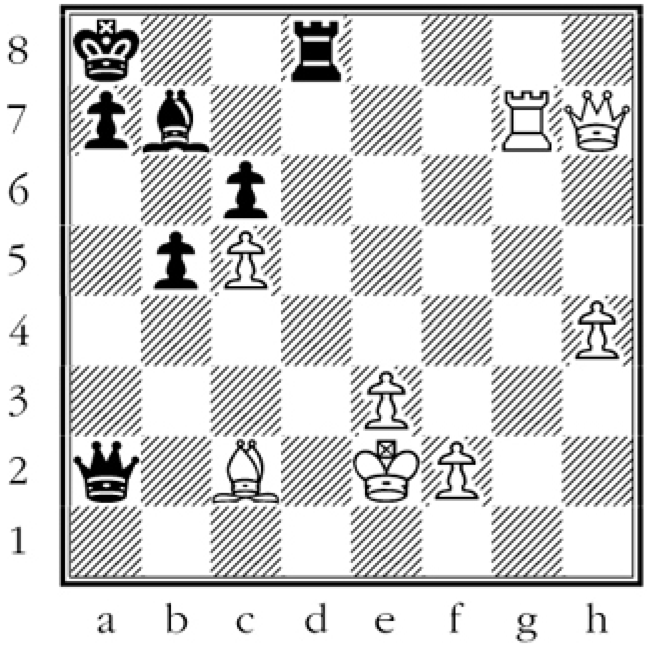
3…Rf8!

Well played. He unpins the knight, threatening …Nd5. This would drive away White's rook from e3, thus preparing the way for …Qb6+ and the exchange of queens.

Black has left his opponent at a loss for a good continuation. White feels there is nothing better to do than to regain one of the pawns. So: **4.Bxf6 Rxf6 5.Rxe6 Rxe6 6.Rxe6 Qb6+! 7.Qxb6 axb6**

Black has achieved his purpose. By simplifying, he has relieved the pressure on his game. The attack is over, and Black will win the endgame with his extra pawn.

In Diagram 11 Black is faced with a much more difficult defensive task. He is a pawn down, his king is insecure, and there is an immediate threat of Rxb7. (D)



11

Black to move

What move satisfactorily guards Black's menaced bishop in this difficult situation?

1…b4!!

This threatens …b3 and thus induces White to simplify. But what is this? – isn’t Black’s bishop attacked??

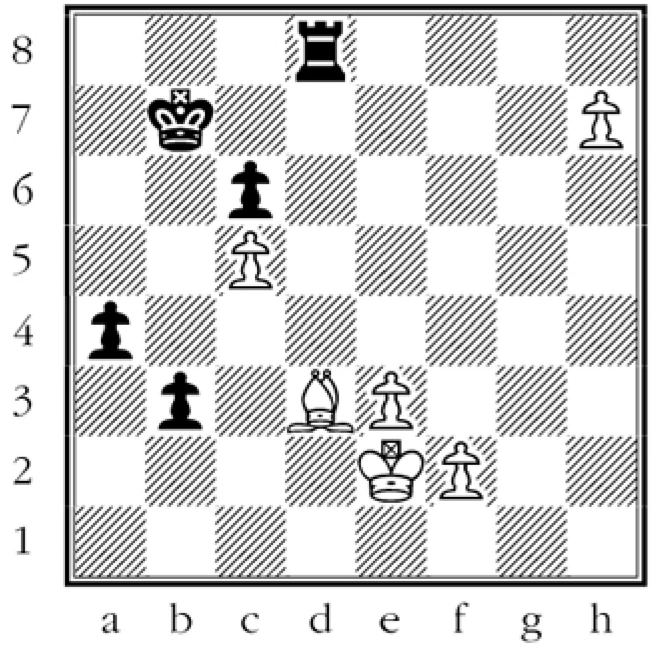
2.Rxb7 Qa6+!

The other point of Black’s previous move. By opening up the diagonal for this check, he made it possible to win the rook.

3.Bd3 Qxb7 4.Qxb7+ Kxb7 5.h5 b3! 6.h6

An exciting ending. Black has calculated well, having foreseen that if 6.Kd2 (instead of White’s last move), then 6…b2! wins at once!

6…a5! 7.h7 a4 (D)



12

White to move

Black’s rook is more agile than White’s bishop; and Black’s connected passed pawns are more menacing than White’s h-pawn.

Black has shown splendid judgment in playing for simplification. Though the ending is close, it favors him in all variations.

Consider this possibility: 8.Kd2 a3 9.Kc3 a2 10.Kb2 Rxd3!! 11.h8Q Rd1!. If now 12.Qh7+ Ka6 and Black wins with the coming …a1Q+. Beautiful play!

8.Bc4

Now Black can win by 8…b2 9.Ba2 a3 10.Bb1 Rh8 11.Kd2 Rxh7! for if 12.Bxh7 a2 and the pawns queen.

But Black has had enough excitement, and decides on a simpler course which is just as convincing:

8…Rh8

Black’s idea is that if now 9.Bg8, then 9…b2 forces the bishop to return to a2, allowing …Rxh7 in reply.

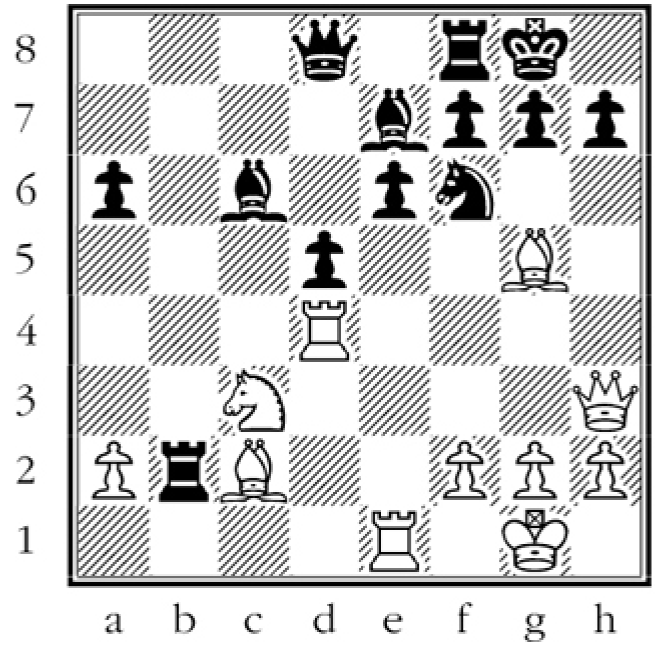
9.Bd3 a3

White resigns, for if 10.Bb1 a2 is deadly. Black’s incisive timing has made this endgame a pleasure to play over. But even more admirable was his foresight in playing for simplification. In this way he neutralized all attacking possibilities on White’s part and prepared for a winning endgame.

Patient Defense

Aggressive defense is good – if you can achieve it. Simplifying is good – if you can achieve it. But what do you do where neither of these methods is possible? In that case you must bide your time – not with passive squirming, but by constantly remaining on the lookout for aggressive counterplay and useful simplification.

How the defender can work toward these goals is shown in the following play, which is more difficult than in the previous examples. (D)



13

White to move

Black is two pawns ahead with a solid position. But when White hits out boldly, Black cannot depend on his material advantage alone.

Many players in Black's position (Diagram 13) would think, "It's all over but the shouting." They would therefore be unprepared for the vicious attack now unleashed by White.

Of course, White gets nowhere with 1.Bxf6 (hoping for 1…Bxf6???? 2.Qxh7#) 1…Rxc2! with nothing to fear. But White has a different way: **1.Bxh7+**

This is not sound. But Black, as you will see, must be wary.

1…Nxh7

Black is not afraid of 2.Bxe7 Qxe7 3.Rh4 despite its deadly appearance. For then he interpolates 3…Qf6! (threatening mate in two) and thereby gains time to protect the knight with 4…Qf5.

2.Rh4 Bxg5 3.Rxh7 Bh6 4.Rxh6 gxh6 5.Qxh6

White threatens a murderous attack with 6.Re3 followed by Rg3+ and mate. Luckily, Black has provided against this seemingly decisive attack.

5…Rb7!!

But not 5…f6?? 6.Qg6+ Kh8 7.Re3 and Black can resign.

6.Re3 f6!

Now that Black has guarded the seventh rank with his previous move, Black need not fear 7.Qg6+. (He has the convincing reply 7…Rg7.) **7.Rg3+ Kf7**

Note how artfully Black has combined the details of his defensive plan. He is safe against 8.Rg7+ (or similar moves), because his rook at b7 is guarded by his bishop.

Black has defended successfully; White has shot his bolt. The rest is easy.

8.f4 Qb6+

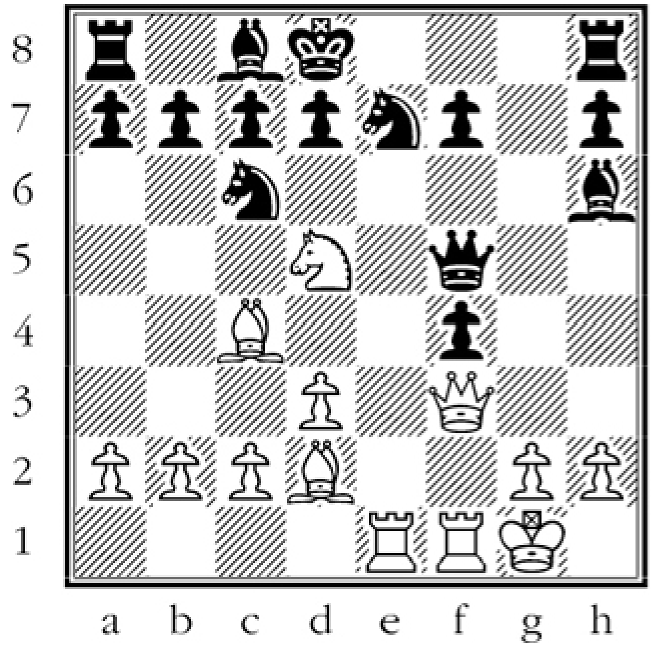
If now 9.Kh1 Qb1+!!.

9.Kf1 Ke8 10.f5 e5 11.Rg6 Bb5+

White resigns. An impressive example of resourceful defensive play by Black.

In Diagram 14 Black's problem is just as difficult, though somewhat different. He is a piece and a pawn to the good, but his king is uncastled and condemned to an exposed position in the center.

Worse yet, White's pieces are all developed and aggressively placed, whereas Black's development has been greatly delayed. (D)



14

White to move

Black’s problem is: can he defend himself successfully despite his arrears in development?

If Black is left in peace for a move or two, he can play …d6 and …Be6 – or else he can simplify with …Nxd5 etc. Consequently, if White is to achieve anything with his attack, he must try to force the pace right now. Thus the next few moves will be critical for both sides.

1.Bc3 Rg8 2.Bf6 Bg5

Black must get rid of the pin at once.

3.Rxe7!?

White hopes for the following tricky variation: 3…Nxe7 4.Nxe7 Qxf6 5.Nxg8 Qg7 6.h4! Bxh4 7.Qxf4 Bg5 8.Qxf7 and White has regained the lost piece.

3…Bxf6!

Alert defensive play, after which White must beat a retreat. Meanwhile, the exchange of pieces has eased Black’s game.

4.Re4 Bg5 5.g4 Qg6 6.h4 Bxh4 7.Qxf4 d6

Now Black is ready for …Qxg4+. This threat – for it is a threat – forces White to gobble a pawn or two. But the result is the exchange of queens, whereby Black eases his position still more.

8.Qxf7 Qxf7 9.Rxf7 Ne5! 10.Rxh7 Nxc4 11.Rxc4 c6

Black’s game is still unwieldy – but in no danger. With the queens off the board, he has nothing to fear.

12.Nc7 Rb8 13.Rf4 Be7 14.Rff7 Kxc7 15.Rxe7+ Kb6

We need not follow the play any further. With a piece to the good and his king in perfect safety, Black is sure to win.

We have so far learned a number of valuable defensive techniques. We have seen that the defender must strive to be alert and aggressive. We have noted the value of simplifying in order to break up the strength of the attack.

Nor is this all. We have seen that sometimes the defender must hold out for a number of moves, patiently but resourcefully biding his time until he is safe from danger.

In the next chapter we turn to another important facet of defensive play. This coming chapter stresses the point that the defender can sometimes succeed only by drastically limiting his goals. If you understand this paradox and put it to good use, you will avoid many a lost game.

Chapter Three

Half a Point is Better than None

A great writer once observed that you can tell a master by the way he limits his ambitions. There is a lot of truth in this observation.

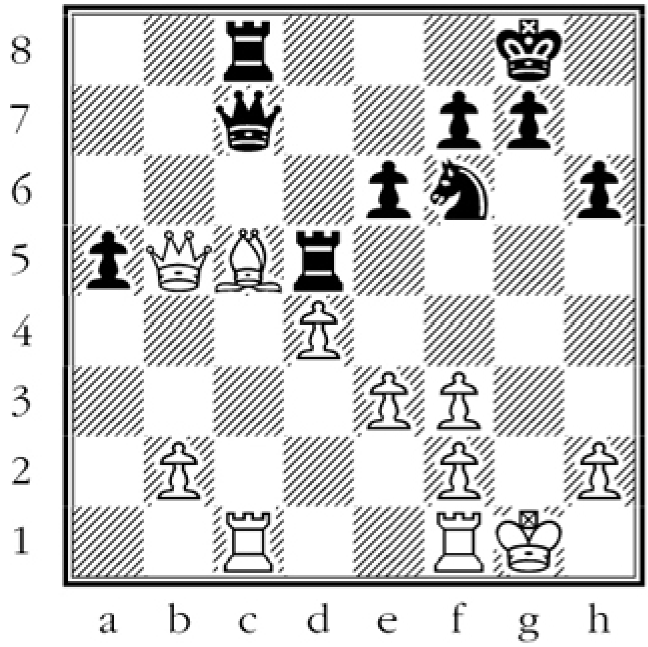
Have you ever realized how your ambitions become broader or narrower during the course of a game? When your opponent is attacking fiercely and when you're hard pressed, you'd be very glad to escape with a draw. Yet, a moment later, when the pressure has eased off, you've forgotten all about your worries, and you play headlong for a win.

Some players are even more optimistic, or shall we say, more stubborn. Even in the most difficult situations, they insist on "all or nothing" – win or lose. And very often they lose precisely because they refuse to concede the half point. (In competitive play, a win equals one point, a draw equals a half point.) What I'm getting at is this: there are some positions so difficult to defend that you do well to accept a draw. Very often, to despise the possible draw means a forced loss. Sometimes it means a likely loss, or a grim, uphill fight at best.

Consequently, to force a draw in such a difficult position is a real accomplishment. Some players still look on a draw as a disgrace or a misfortune; however, when you look at the following examples, you will realize how much skill and artistry go into the job of forcing a draw in a lost position.

Drawing by Perpetual Check

A perpetual check is often a welcome resource in disagreeable situations. Take Diagram 15 as a case in point. (D)



15

Black to move

With a pawn down, Black welcomes the opportunity to force a draw by perpetual check. How?

Black finds a wonderfully ingenious resource to draw the game.

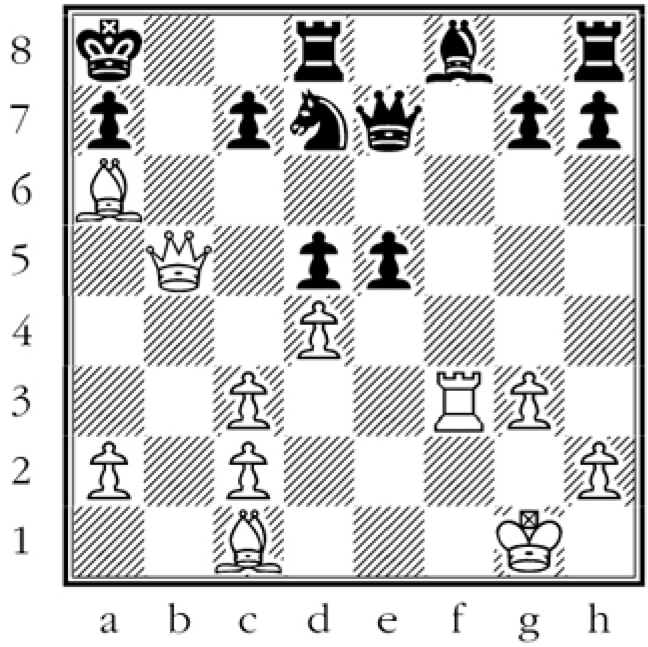
1…Qxh2+! 2.Kxh2 Rh5+

And now, believe it or not, Black has a forced draw even though he is a queen down!

3.Kg3 Rg5+ 4.Kf4 Rf5+

White agrees to a draw, for after 5.Kg3 Rg5+ 6.Kh3 Rh5+ he still cannot make any headway. In this example you see with beautiful clarity the usefulness of forcing a draw in a position that would be lost by the usual run-ofthe-mill moves. And who can deny that Black displayed the highest artistry in finding this exquisite resource?

When we turn to Diagram 16, we find that the defender is in an even more desperate situation. White threatens Qb7#. If Black defends with 1…Rb8 or 1…Nb6, then 2.Qc6+ forces checkmate. (D)



16

Black to move

Can Black save the game? If so, how?

Black's position is desperate; no doubt of it.

But note this: in order to build up his attack, White had previously sacrificed a rook. With a rook ahead, Black can well afford to give up material in order to escape form the mate trap.

Is there some counter-sacrifice that offers a way out? let's try the only possibility:

1…Nc5!!

Splendid play! The point is that if 2.dxc5 (again threatening mate), Black wins with 2…Qxc5+ forcing the exchange of queens and a winning endgame, thanks to his material advantage.

Thus Black has prevented Qb7#, and meanwhile he threatens …Nxa6, squelching the attack once for all.

But suppose White plays 2.Ba3 with a view to …Bxc5 and wins? Can Black still hold out? Yes! – his position holds by a hair, but it holds. In the event of 2.Ba3, Black parries deftly with 2…Qd7!!.

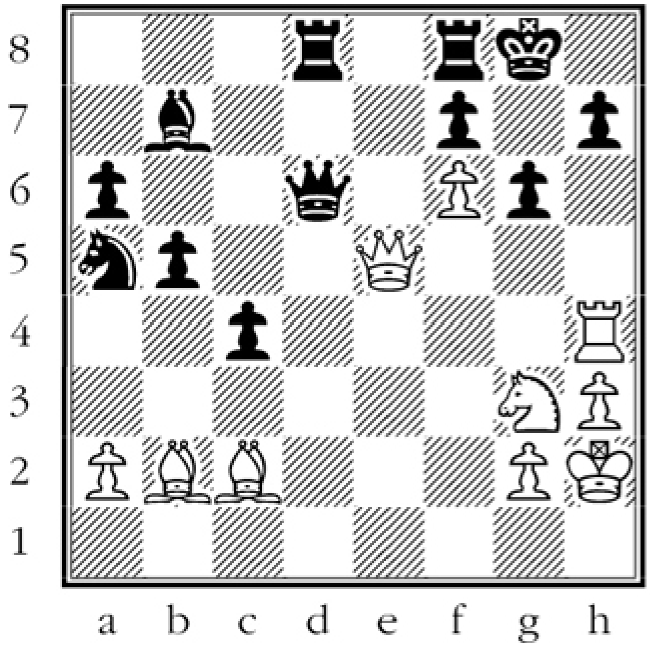
In that case, 3.Qxd7 Nxd7 is equivalent to resignation on White's part. Thus he is forced to play 3.dxc5, allowing Black to continue 3…Qxb5 with a winning endgame.

White sees that this won't do at all. This time he's the one who's happy to take a perpetual check. So:

2.Qc6+ Kb8 3.Qb5+ Ka8 Drawn.

Both sides must be content with the drawn result. White draws despite his material minus; Black draws despite the mating menace.

In Diagram 17 the play is even more exciting. White is the great Professor Anderssen, one of the finest attacking players in the history of the game. The black pieces are played by Zukertort, his most brilliant pupil. Both of these masters of sparkling combinative play outdo themselves in conjuring up magnificent resources. (D)



17

White to move

White, who is two pawns and the exchange down, must stake everything on his attack. Black is hard put to it to escape disaster.

White begins an extraordinarily brilliant attack with:

1.Qg5!

Threatening Qh6 followed by mate. What is Black to do?

1…Qd2!

A superb defense which parries White's threat and in turn threatens …Qxg2#. At this point, most players handling the white pieces would resign. But White finds an amazing resource: **2.Nf5!!**

A move that sparkles with pretty possibilities.

For example, if 2…Qxc2 3.Ne7+ Kh8 4.Rxh7+ Kxh7 5.Qh4#.

Or 2…Qxg2+ 3.Qxg2 Bxg2 4.Ne7+ Kh8 5.Nxg6+ fxg6 6.f7+ followed by mate – or 5…Kg8 6.Ne7+ Kh8 7.Rxh7#.

Black finds the only defense.

2…Qxg5

Has White gone mad? Black has not only won the queen; he actually threatens mate on the move. But Black will be happy to get a draw!

3.Ne7+ Kh8

Apparently White has shot his bolt.

4.Nxg6+!!

As we have seen earlier, Black gets mated if he plays 4…fxg6 or 4…Kg8. He must give back the queen.

4…Qxg6 5.Bxg6

And now if 5…fxg6 6.f7+ forces mate!

5…Rd7!

With formidable counterthreats. White is now happy to take the perpetual check:

6.Rxh7+ Kg8 7.Rg7+ Drawn.

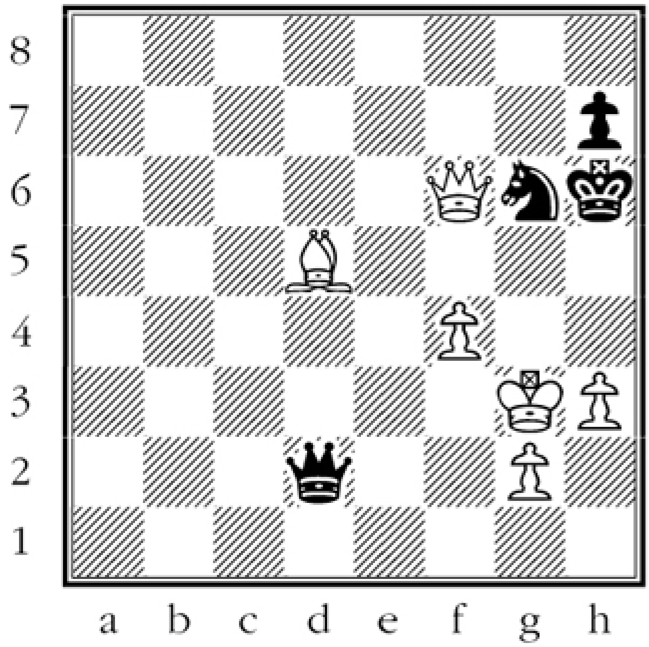
Black cannot avoid the perpetual check. White must take it because he is still a rook down. One of the finest examples of master chess ever played.

Drawing by Stalemate

The examples of perpetual check we've just seen have an almost miraculous quality about them. They remind us that if we have faith, we can often achieve the impossible.

To bring about a stalemate is in the nature of things just as miraculous. An opponent who is good enough to win material from you ought to be good enough not to let you hoodwink him with stalemate. And yet these miracles do happen.

An extraordinary instance occurred in the position of Diagram 18, in which White, with two pawns to the good, allowed his alert opponent to escape with a draw. (D)



18

White to move

What is the best way for White to guard the attacked bishop?

White’s bishop is attacked. There are many ways to meet the threat, but it was White’s misfortune to overlook a delightful tactical possibility.

One of the simplest ways to continue was 1.Qg5+ Kg7 2.Bf3. Instead there followed:

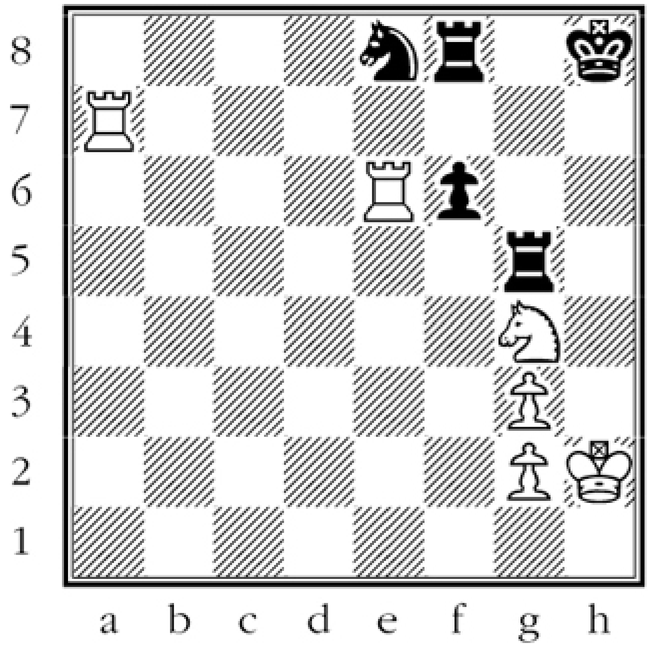
1.Bf3??

What could be more plausible? And yet the move is an unforgivable blunder. For now the black king is in a stalemate position. Black pounces on his chance to escape from a lost game.

1…Qf2+!!

Draw! For after 2.Kxf2 Black is left without a move. Nor will 2.Kh2 help, for then Black plays 2…Qg3+! or 2…Qg1+!. Similarly, on 2.Kg4 Black has 2…Qg3+!. Imagine White’s chagrin!

In the position of Diagram 19 the play proceeds in an even more spectacular manner. Here it’s not a question of either player blundering. White makes an ingenious attempt to win; Black foils him in an even more ingenious manner! (D)



19

White to move

White's winning plan will tax Black's defensive resources to the utmost.

The powerful position of one of his rooks on the seventh rank gives White an ingenious winning idea:

1.Rxe8!

Expecting 1…Rxe8 2.Nxf6 and wins because of the double threat of 3.Rh7# or 3.Nxe8.

Black is apparently lost, but he finds a masterly defense based on a piquant stalemate idea.

1…Rh5+!

A mysterious-looking move which is the basis of Black's plan.

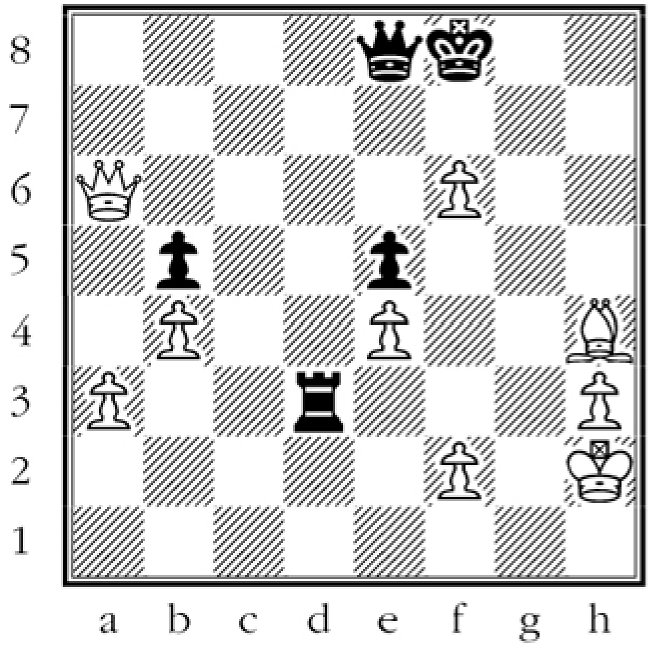
2.Kg1 Rxe8 3.Nxf6 Rh1+!!

This first point!

4.Kxh1 Re1+ 5.Kh2 Rh1+!!

The final point. After 6.Kxh1 Black is stalemated. A witty finish.

Our final example of stalemate is equally amusing. In the position of Diagram 20 Black finds himself in an apparently hopeless situation. White has four pawns for the exchange, and Black's king is exposed to attack. (D)



Black to move

Black’s position seems ripe for resignation. Instead, he forces a sensational draw.

What now happens is almost too good to be true. However, it did happen in an international master’s tournament!

1…Rxh3+!

White can hardly decline the rook, as this would cost him his bishop.

2.Kxh3 Qe6+!!

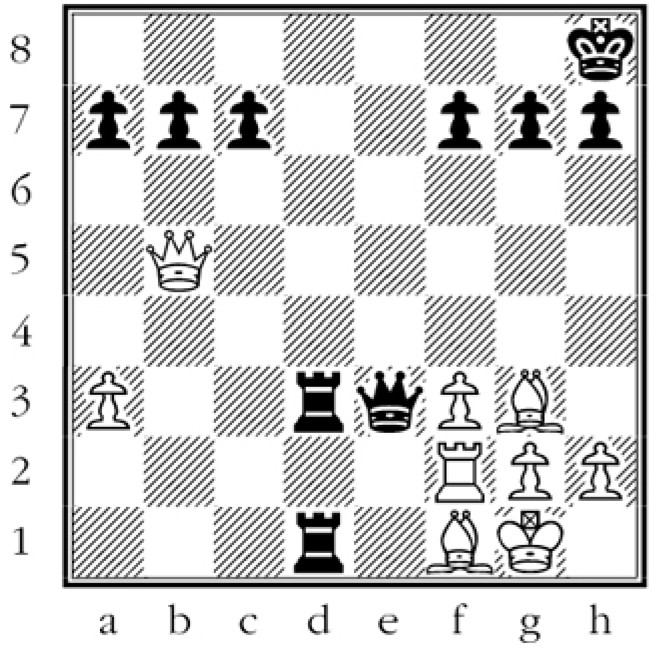
And who could expect such a move?

3.Qxe6 Drawn.

Black is stalemated! Unfortunately, White’s comment is not on record.

Drawing by Repetition of Moves

This drawing method is not too frequent, but it has produced some remarkable finishes. It implies an equilibrium of forces, in which both players are compelled to draw because they have no better line of play. Diagram 21 is a good example. (D)



21

White to move

Black threatens 1…Rxf1+! 2.Kxf1 Rd1#. Because of the variation just pointed out, White decides to unpin his rook: **1.Kh1!**

White is momentarily safe, but now Black finds an even more vicious pin:

1…Qe2!

Threatens 2…Rxf1+ or 2…Qxf1+ followed by mate.

And of course White must not play 2.Rxe2?? because of 2…Rxf1#. So White defends with:

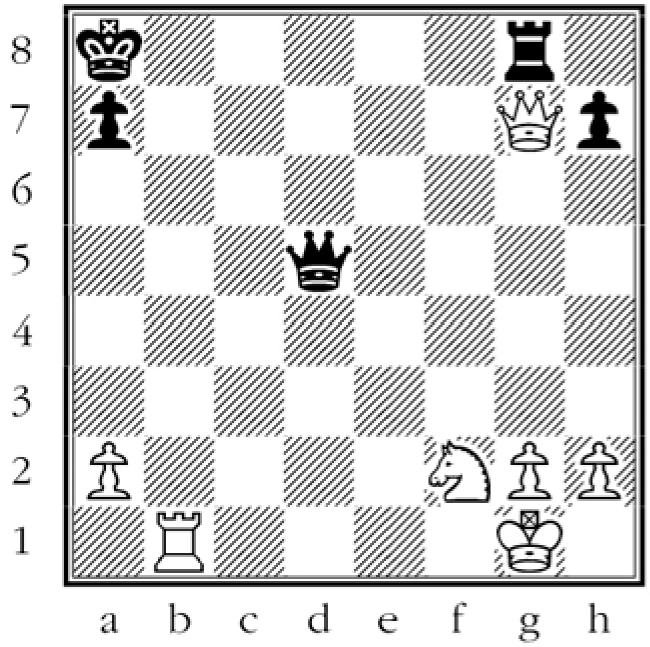
2.Kg1! Qe3!

Renewing the threat of …Rxf1+ followed by …Rd1#.

3.Kh1! Qe2! 4.Kg1! Qe3!

Abandoned as a draw. Neither player can vary from the prescribed sequence without losing. A fine example of ingenious play on both sides.

Diagram 22 illustrates the same delicate technique, but in an even more attractive form. (D)



22

White to move

Though a knight and a pawn to the good, White is apparently lost. If he moves his queen off the g-file, he gets mated.

White cannot move his queen, true. But he can resort to our tried and true resource: counterattack. Therefore:

1.Rb5!

Masterly play! If 1…Qxb5 2.Qxg8+ wins.

Worse yet, Black's queen is rooted to the spot, for 1…Qc4? or 1…Qe6? allow 2.Qb7#.

How then does Black protect his rook?

He doesn't! Instead, he counterattacks:

1…Re8!

Threatening …Re1#. Now he threatens …Qxb5 as well.

White finds the only way to parry both threats:

2.Rb1! Rg8!

Naturally, in view of his material minus, Black must renew his attack on the white queen.

3.Rb5!

Just as naturally, White must renew his attack on the black queen.

3…Re8! 4.Rb1! Rg8! Drawn.

The forced back-and-forth moves of the rooks lead to a forced draw.

All these examples have been vastly entertaining and equally instructive. They reinforce the moral that a draw is a perfectly welcome and legitimate goal in desperate positions where you can see no better solution. For half a point is better than none; a draw is better than a loss.

Chapter Four

The Defense Fumbles

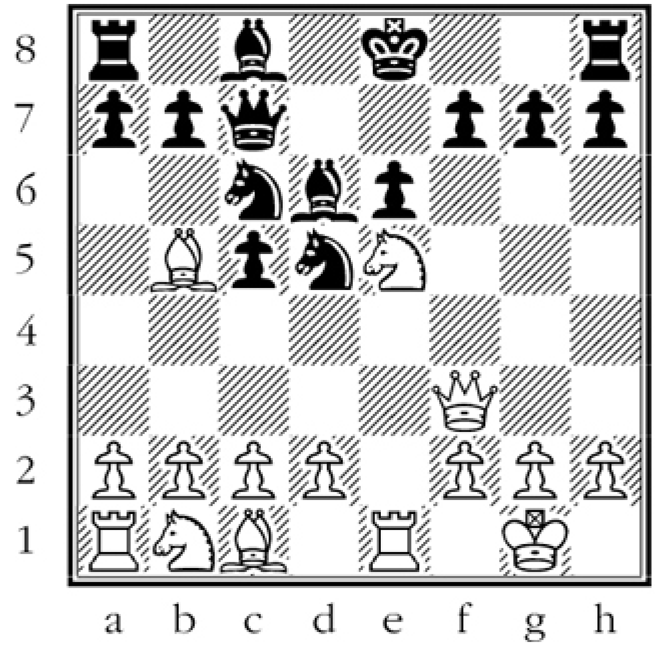
So far we have seen the triumphs that alert and accurate defense can achieve. But, as you know from your own experience, defense can be a spotty affair. A superb move may be followed by one that brings down the whole position with a crash.

It is heartening and instructive to study examples of good defense. It’s even more instructive to study examples of faulty defense, so that we know what to avoid. And such instances of faulty defense give us a sobering realization of what we must do in our own games to avoid disaster.

The Right Way and the Wrong Way

Most catastrophes of defense come about because a player chooses the wrong move. One move spells salvation, the other means defeat. So, one bad choice and the game is lost.

Diagram 23 shows us such a position. Black’s snap judgment loses for him very quickly. (D)



23

White to move

White’s next move is obvious, while Black’s reply is far from obvious!

Relying on a multiplicity of pins, White slyly played:

1.Nxc6!

Black, without much thought, replied:

1…bxc6?

This loses, as White now convincingly proves.

2.Qxd5

Now Black is shocked into the realization that his is stymied by no less than three pins. Thus 2…exd5 or 2…cxd5 are altogether impossible. And 2…cxb5 is possible though not desirable, because of the reply 3.Qxa8.

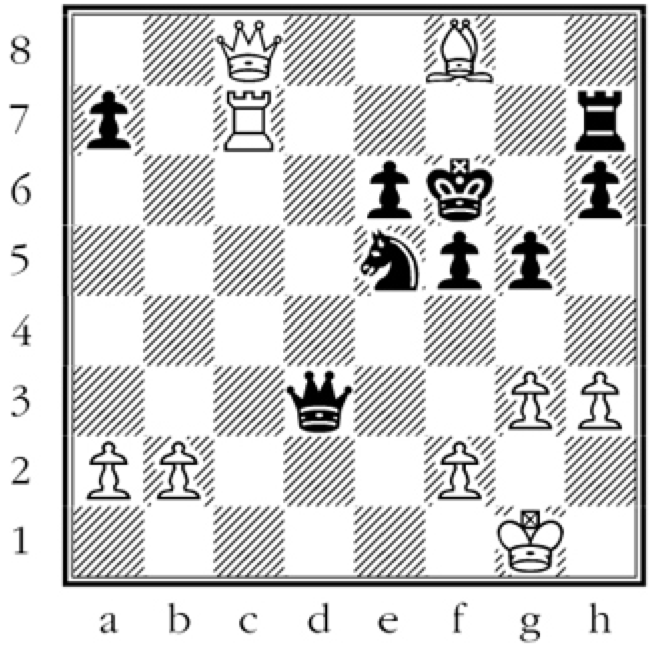
Will 2…Bd7 save the day for Black? No; White simply retreats 3.Qe4 or 3.Qf3 and his attacked bishop is still immune.

And so Black, with a piece down and no way of regaining it, is hopelessly lost.

Let’s go back to Diagram 23, and see how Black *should have played.* After 1.Nxc6 the right reply was 1…0-0!. In that case, with Black’s king removed from the e-file, White can no longer play Qxd5. Another feature is that White’s knight at c6 has no escape! Black must therefore regain the piece.

It is true that White can play 2.Nxa7 coming out a pawn ahead. However, Black can still fight on; there is a great deal of play left in the game. Consequently 1…0-0! was the right defensive move.

In Diagram 24 Black goes wrong in very much the same way. (D)



24

White to move

Black’s king is hard pressed; nevertheless he can hold out with best play.

Though Black’s king is in hot water, we must admit that Black has set up his defense very cleverly. If for example 1.Rxh7 Black plays 1…Nf3+. If then 2.Kh1?? 2…Qf1#. White must therefore play 2.Kg2, whereupon 2…Ne1+ forces a draw by perpetual check (3.Kg1 Nf3+ 4.Kg2 Ne1+ etc.).

White therefore tries a swindle:

1.Be7+!? Kg6??

And Black succumbs! The rest is agony.

2.Qxe6+ Kh5 3.Qxe5 f4 4.Bd6 fxg3 5.Qe8+ Black resigns.

For if 5…Kh4 6.fxg3+ Kxh3 7.Qh5# and if 5…Qg6 6.Qe2+ wins.

Now let’s go back to Diagram 24 and see how Black *should have played.*

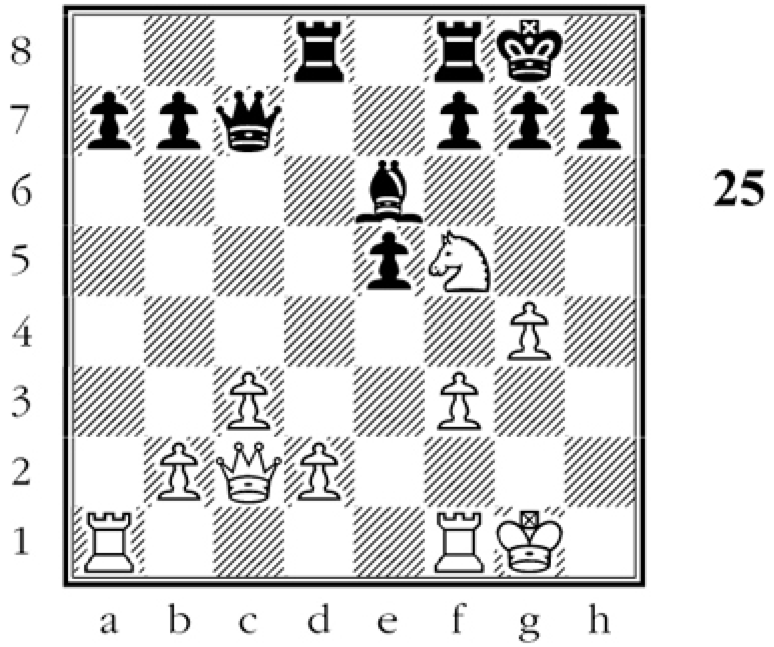
After 1.Be7+!? Black’s proper reply is the seeming dangerous 1…Rxe7! In that case 2.Qf8+? fails after 2…Rf7.

Consequently White must play 2.Qh8+. Then Black has nothing to worry about after 2…Kg6.

For if 3.Qxe5 Rxc7 4.Qxc7 Qb1+ and Black’s game is perfectly satisfactory. And if 3.Rxe7 Nf3+ 4.Kg2 Ne1+ when Black draws by the perpetual check already shown.

But, as we’ve seen, Black made the wrong choice and lost the game.

In the position of Diagram 25, the contrast between the right way and the wrong way is even more glaring. (D)



White to move

By playing 1.Rxa7??!, White sets a trap which Black can refute in the most incisive manner. But Black also has a chance to go wrong!

Here is what happened:

1.Rxa7??!

A baleful trap.

1…Qb6+

Good enough, though not the most direct course.

2.Kg2 Qxa7???

Of all the defensive blunders I have ever seen, this one is undoubtedly the worst!

3.Ne7+ Kh8 4.Qxh7+!! Kxh7 5.Rh1#

A spectacular finish, and perhaps we can forgive Black for missing it. Here is how he *should* have played:

1…Bxf5!

Black allows the queen to keep the threat …Qb6+ in reserve. Thus he must win at least a piece and the flashy checkmate is ruled out.

There was still another way for Black to handle this situation correctly:

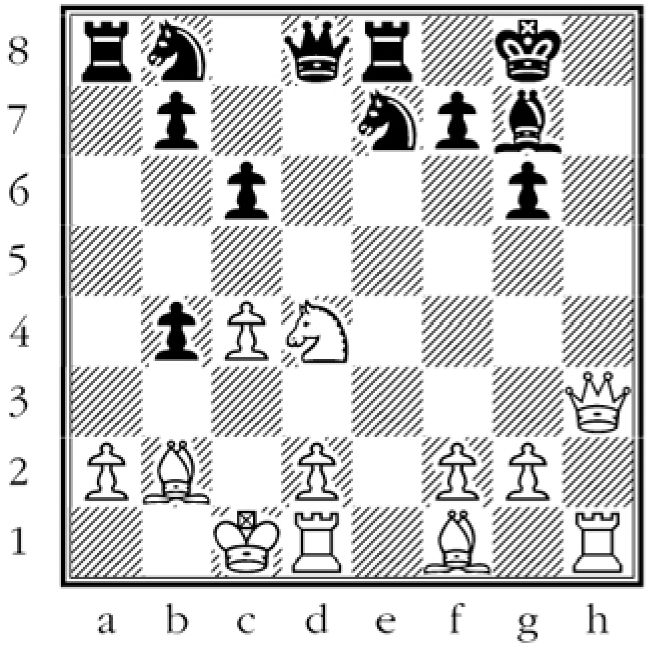
1.Rxa7??! Qb6+ 2.Kg2 Bxf5!.

Again Black wins a piece and eliminates the flamboyant checkmate.

Walking into It

One of the worst types of defensive blunders comes about when a player walks into a trap that has been deliberately set for him. Nothing, in fact, is so conducive to blundering as the belief that your opponent has blundered. Our powerful sense of elation blinds us to the possibility that there is more to the position than meets the eye.

Thus, in Diagram 26 Black sees that he can win a piece. Before going any further, he grabs the loose knight – to his sorrow. (D)



26

Black to move

What is White’s threat, and how can Black guard against it? Should Black accept or decline the knight?

In the position of Diagram 26 White threatens 1.Ne6!. If then 1…fxe6 2.Qh7+ and 3.Qxg7#. Or if 1…Bxb2+ 2.Kxb2 fxe6 3.Qh8+ Kf7 4.Rh7#.*

The best way for Black to guard against the threat seems to be 1…Nc8. If then 2.Ne6?* Bxb2+ 3.Kxb2 Qf6+ and Black prevents the mate and wins a piece as well.

Instead of all this, Black plays very naively. He sees that he can capture the knight; he goes right ahead without asking himself why this opportunity has been made to order for him.

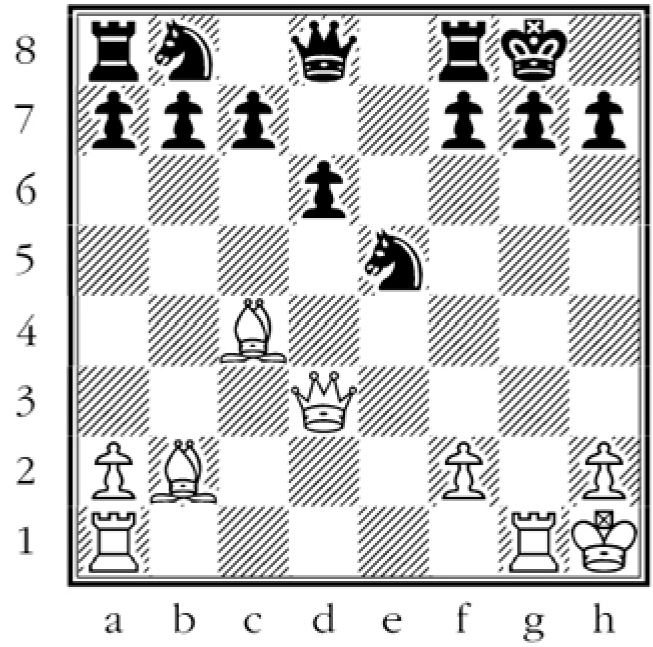
1…Bxd4?? 2.Qh8+!!

This will hurt a bit.

2…Bxh8 3.Rxh8#

Now it is all clear. The white knight was merely bait.

In Diagram 27 the bait is even more valuable, so that you would expect Black to be correspondingly more careful. This time White has obligingly left his queen on a square where she can be captured. (D)



27

Black to move

Should Black capture the queen?

Black's decision to capture the queen is, as we shall see, a blunder. However, it is to some extent an excusable blunder. He sees White's second move, but overlooks his third. And this third move, you will have to admit, is not an easy move to foresee.

1…Nxd3? 2.Rxg7+ Kh8

This much Black foresaw. He knows there is no good discovered check, because White's bishop at b2 is under attack.

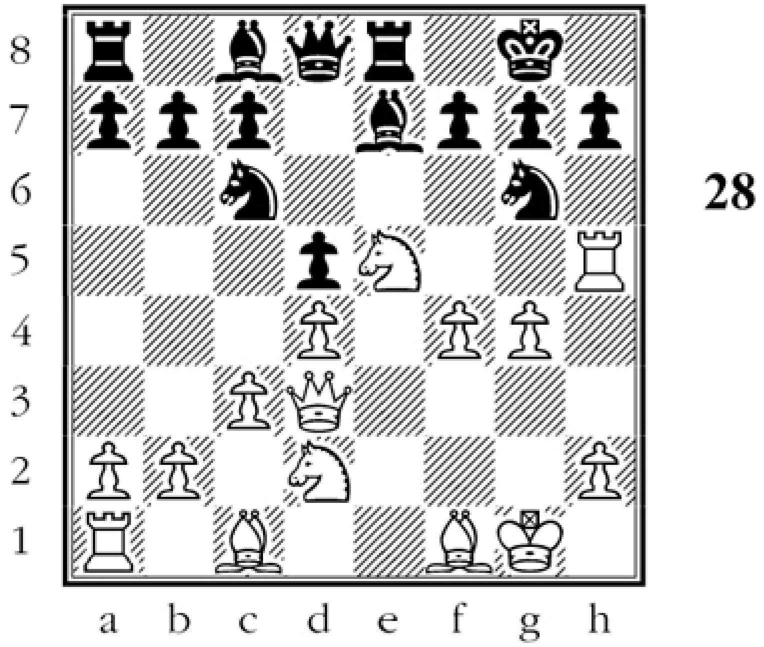
But what about a *double check?*

3.Rg8++!

This is the move that Black overlooked.

3…Kxg8 4.Rg1+ Qg5 5.Rxg5#

In Diagram 28, too, the defender’s failure to fathom the point of White’s attack is pardonable. Few combinations have ever been played to equal this one in subtlety. (D)



White to move

Black does not dream that White is planning a very brilliant attack.

White’s opening move is well calculated to confuse his unsuspecting opponent:

1.Ndc4!!

This fantastic move is probably best answered by 1…Bf6 creating an escape hatch for the black king. Why the king needs an escape will soon become clear.

Instead of weighing the possibilities, Black grabs the offered knight.

1…dxc4

And now what?

2.Qxg6!!

Threatening 3.Qxh7+ Kf8 4.Qh8#. (This explains why Black should have made room for his king’s escape.)

2…hxg6

Black sees that after 2…fxg6 White forces mate by 3.Bxc4+ Kh8 4.Nxg6# or 3…Kf8 4.Nxg6+! hxg6 5.Rh8#. (Another indication of the black king’s need for fresh air.) **3.Nxg6!**

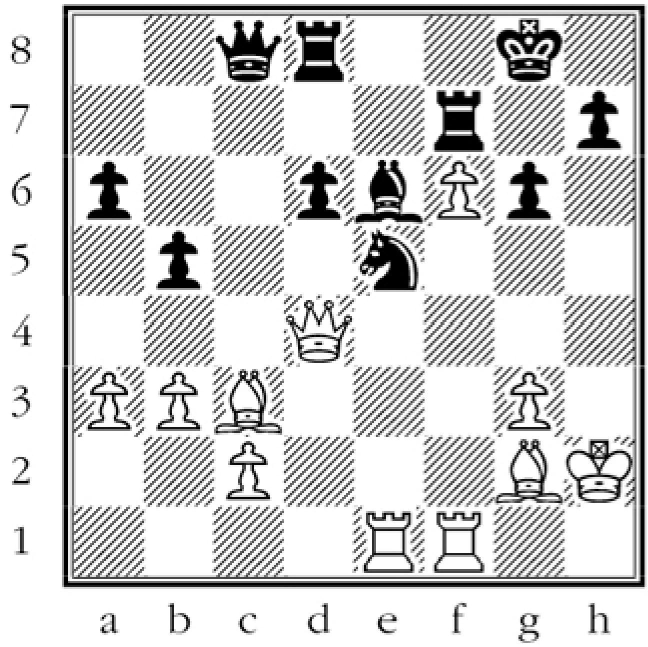
Threatens 4.Rh8#.

3…fxg6 4.Bxc4+ Kf8

Such moves as 4…Qd5 and 4…Be6 would only delay the mate without stopping it.

5.Rh8#

If Black's failure to foresee this glorious combination was forgivable, we can hardly say the same for Black's lapse in the position of Diagram 29. There he has a solid defensive position; but he fails to realize that the blockade on f7 is necessary to hold his position together. (D)



29

Black to move

What would happen if Black moved his rook from f7?

White's position is generally more aggressive, but Black seems safe as long as he keeps up the barricade at f7. But Black does not realize the importance of this blockade, for he plays: **1…Rfd7?**

This allows White to open the long diagonal leading to g7 and h8. It also makes it worthwhile for him to sacrifice the exchange in order to operate on the long diagonal.

2.Rxe5! dxe5 3.f7+!

Very fine. He forces the opening of the diagonal. (On the other hand, after 3.Qxe5?, Black would resume the blockade with 3…Rf7 or 3…Bf7.) **3…Rxf7 4.Qxe5**

White threatens Qh8#. And if 4…Rxf1 5.Qg7#. Now we can appreciate the power of White’s attack along the diagonal.

4…Kf8 5.Qg7+!

With this pretty move, White forces the game. If now 5…Ke8 6.Qg8+ Ke7 7.Bb4+ Kd7 8.Rxf7+ and Black gets mated.

5…Ke7 6.Bb4+ Black resigns.

Black is helpless. If he tries 6…Rd6 then 7.Rxf7+ Bxf7 8.Qe5+ Qe6 9.Bxd6+ is crushing.

Or if 6…Kd7 7.Rxf7+ Bxf7 8.Qxf7#.

Black’s swift collapse came about after he opened the gates to the enemy by giving up the blockade at f7.

In this chapter you have seen some of the ways in which the defense can go wrong. It is lack of awareness, lack of aggressive spirit, that leads a player to surrender so readily to his opponent’s intentions. So be warned: the defense does not play itself. Eternal vigilance is the price of successful resistance.

Chapter Five

How to Fight Back: Practical Examples

It’s one thing to know how to fight back, it’s another thing to be able to do it yourself in you own games!

So, for the balance of this book let’s look at complete games. We’ll see how mistakes are made early in the play. We’ll observe how these mistakes lead to mounting difficulties. We’ll watch the critical position arrive, and we’ll be able to judge whether or not the player who is under pressure is able to solve his problem successfully.

After studying these models of *complete games,* you’ll be able to counterattack a great deal more competently in your own games.

Faulty Defense

First, let’s see what happens when a player gets himself into a lot of trouble and can’t get out of it. If this player hits back, it’s with nothing stronger than cream puffs.

Irregular Opening

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 g6?

With the game barely started, Black has committed a mistake which should lose the game for him.

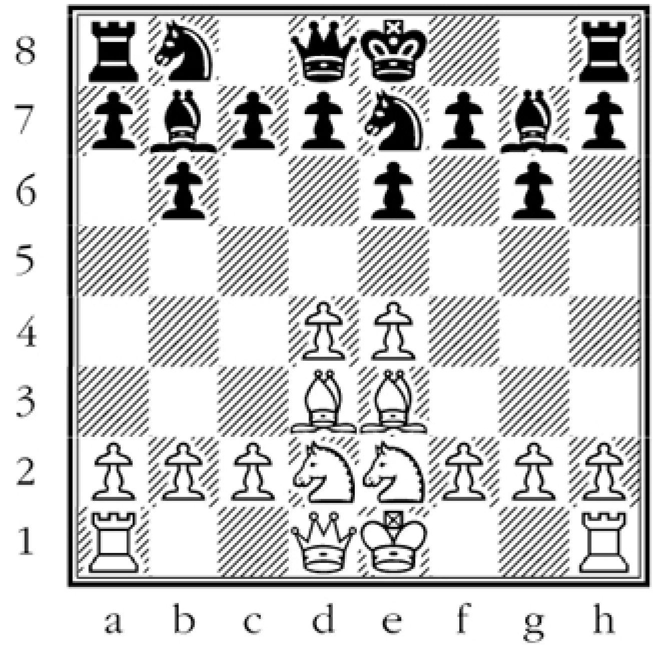
Why this move is wrong can best be understood if we ask this question: What is Black’s best second move?

The right way was 2…d5!. In that case Black fights for control of the center squares. By disputing control of the center squares, he struggles to get just as good a foothold in the center for his pieces as White has for *his* pieces.

So, by playing 2…g6?, Black has ignored the fight for control of the center. His pieces will therefore lack mobility; they will have little scope; they will be forced into a crowded, defensive formation.

As the play unfolds, you will see how the violation of these guiding principles causes Black’s game to fall apart.

3.Bd3 Bg7 4.Be3 Ne7 5.Ne2 b6 6.Nd2 Bb7 (D)


30

White to move

Black’s pieces have a cramped position with no prospects of active play.

The game is proceeding according to our diagnosis. Black’s position is very cramped, and he has no positive plan available. Even at this early stage he has nothing to look forward to but pure defense; not a very heartening prospect.

But White, as you will see, has a much freer game and a choice of possible initiatives.

7.0-0 d5

This comes late in the day. White responds with an aggressive advance.

8.e5 0-0 9.f4 f5

The right strategy for Black. Since his mobility is limited, he plays to barricade the position. Then, when White tries to attack, he may not be able to get through the barriers Black has set up.

This is a plausible defensive notion. Unfortunately, the weight of experience is against it. In chess, it’s generally true that where there’s a will, there’s a way. White has more mobility; he has the initiative; he has the future. If he proceeds aggressively, he can break through.

Even against a solid defense? Yes, even then. For in a defensive position where the defender’s pieces are crowded together – as they are here – his pieces aren’t worth very much. Consequently, a sacrifice of material on the attacker’s part involves no great risk.

The defender's trouble, you see, is that he cannot rally his cramped and ineffectual pieces very rapidly to the scene of action. Consequently, his king's position is likely to be overrun while his useless pieces straggle idly, far from the scene of battle.

10.h3 Nd7 11.Kh2 c5 12.c3 c4 13.Bc2 a6

Black is dallying with a slight attempt at counterplay. He wants to advance his b-pawn and a-pawn and force open a file on the queenside by a pawn exchange. (for example, …b5, …a5, …b4, and …bxc3.) He hopes in this way to distract White's attention from the kingside. But of course this is a futile hope, for White's corresponding advance on the kingside is intended to smoke out the black king.

So here you have a valuable maxim of defensive play: don't expect to entice your opponent from maximum goals by tempting him with low-grade bait.

14.Nf3 h6?

And this move gives aid and comfort to the enemy. By moving another pawn on the kingside, Black weakens his castled position. With his last move, he has undermined the support of his g-pawn. This will eventually make possible White's winning sacrifice against the weakened point.

Another objection to Black's last move is that it is inconsistent. Since he has announced his intention of counterattacking on the queenside, he should have played 14…b5. Instead, Black vacillates. He doesn't know what he's doing; he doesn't know what he ought to do. In his ignorance, he is pulling down the pillars of his own defensive structure.

15.g4! Kh7 16.Rg1!

White, on the other hand, is well aware of what his position calls for. He is prepared to open up a file on the kingside, and he has placed heavy artillery on the file that he intends to open – the g-file.

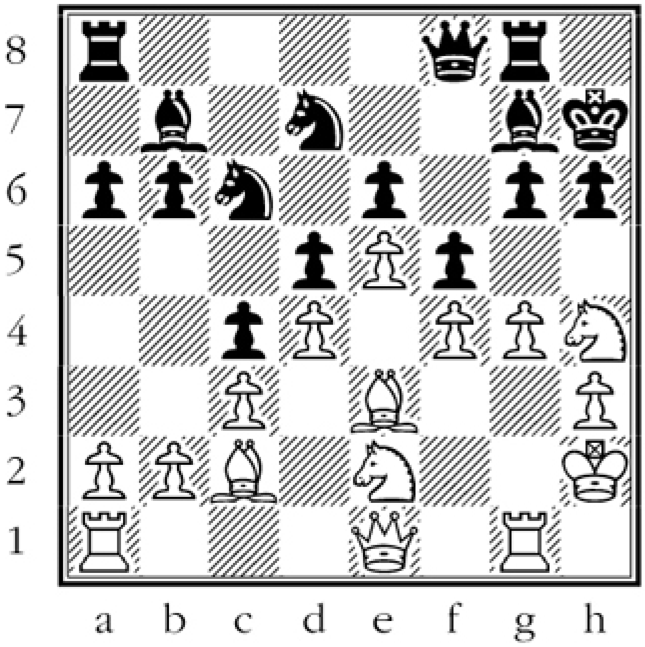
16…Rg8 17.Qe1 Nc6?

Granting that Black's position should be lost in any event, he makes it too easy for his opponent. You've already seen from the note to his 14th move that his g-pawn has been weakened. In its present state it is no longer guarded by a pawn. *Therefore it must be guarded by pieces.*

Consequently Black's knight at e7 was doing a useful job guarding his g-pawn. But now Black has moved the knight away, so that his weak pawn has lost one of its main supports.

18.Nh4! Qf8?

Wrong. White's last move menaces the weak g-pawn, which needs more protection. Thus 18…Nf8 was indicated. (D)



31

White to move

Black has weakened his position irretrievably and he will now succumb to a crushing attack.

Black has created a weakness (the unprotected g-pawn) in his position. He has removed a piece that guarded the pawn, and he has neglected to bring additional support to the pawn.

Now he pays the penalty for his faulty defense as White breaks through with a sacrifice:

19.Nxg6!!

Black cannot very well decline the knight. If for example 19…Qf7 20.gxf5 exf5 21.Nh4 Ne7 22.Nxf5! Nxf5 23.Ng3. In that case White wins the pinned knight, remaining with a material advantage and a crushing attack against the black king.

19…Kxg6 20.gxf5++

Now White smashes through by opening up the g-file. (He prepared for this with his 11th, 15th, and 16th moves.)

Black has little choice here, for if he tries 20…Kh7 then 21.fxe6+ shatters his position.

20…Kf7 21.fxe6+ Kxe6 22.f5+ Ke7 23.Qh4+ Ke8

Black's king is being driven around brutally. Black is still ahead materially with a piece for two pawns. However, this means little in a situation where White's forces are all-powerful, whereas Black's pieces are cramped, crowded, and ineffectual. (Re-read the note to Black's ninth move, in which the likelihood of such a situation was prophesied.) **24.f6**

White's onrushing pawns have irresistible dynamic power.

Thus, if Black tries 24…Bh8 White simply continues with 25.Rxg8 Qxg8 26.Rg1 Qf8 27.Bxh6. In that case, White has a third pawn for the sacrificed piece, and his attack rolls right on.

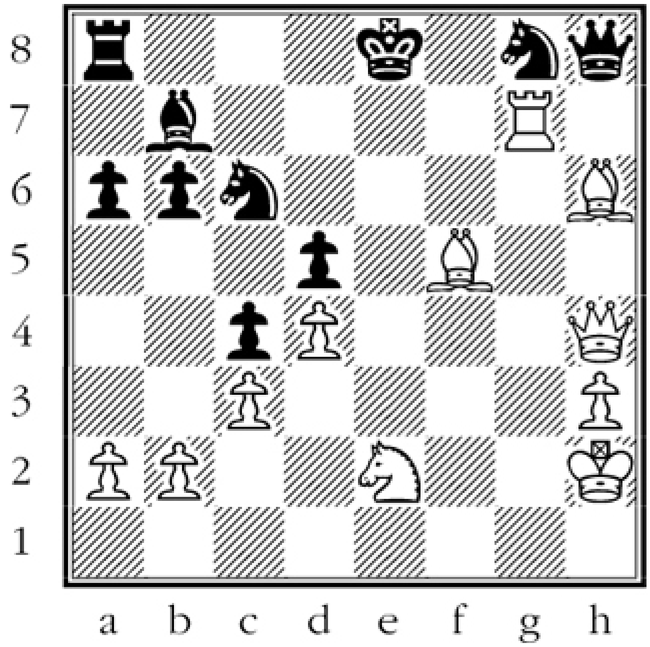
24…Bxf6

Black gives back the piece in order to break the force of the advancing pawn rush. However, this fails to improve Black's position appreciably, as his king remains exposed to attack by White's splendidly posted pieces.

25.exf6 Rxg1 26.Rxg1 Nxf6

Black's return of the extra piece hasn't pacified White. The black king still finds himself in the crossfire of the white pieces.

27.Bg6+ Kd7 28.Bf5+ Ke8 29.Bxh6 Qh8 30.Rg7 Ng8 (D)



32

White to move

As a result of his faulty development and faulty defense, Black now succumbs to a forced checkmate.

Black has come to the end of the road. White now announces mate in three moves by 31.Bg6+ Kf8 32.Qf4+ Nf6 33.Qxf6#. Note the concentration of four white pieces – queen, rook, and two bishops – against Black's wretched king.

Black relied on the pawn barrier to protect his king from harm. This reliance was based on a faulty notion – that once the position was barricaded it would stay that way. This is the essence of bad defensive thinking. If the attacker is alert and aggressive enough, he will always find a way to break through.

When you're on the defensive, then, it's your chief job to watch for that deadly moment, and prepare for it. How? One way is to try to give your pieces the utmost mobility, so that you will be able to counterattack.

If the position is not suitable for counterattack, then mobility is still something you want to aim for. As long as your pieces have freedom of action, you can bring them quickly to the threatened zone. Above all, avoid the kind of position Black gets in Diagram 31, where his queen is stuck in the mud and the three queenside pieces have nothing whatever to say about the fate of their king.

But this game is not a typical creditable defensive effort. Black made every conceivable defensive mistake, and thoroughly earned his disastrous defeat. In the remaining games we'll see what happens when the defender does a good job.

Gradual Counterplay

The next game is one of my favorites in this field. Black starts off with a cramped position by the very nature of the opening. But, as you will see, he is well aware of the danger. He concentrates on developing his pieces effectively, and tries constantly to put them on the best squares.

Having accepted a gambit in the opening, Black is a pawn ahead to begin with. But he doesn't clutch this pawn like a miser: as early as the sixth move, he's ready to return it. This is important; for many a defender has ruined his position beyond redemption by greedily clinging to material.

Even when Black loses the castling privilege, he is not dismayed. The danger is minimal because his development is satisfactory. Consequently White cannot exploit the lack of castling.

In due time Black's counterattack sets in. It will come to you as a complete surprise. But, after you've played over the whole game, you'll do well to return to the position of Diagram 34, and arrive at a clear understanding of what Black did and why he succeeded in doing it.

This is a game which will repay your playing over many times. It is a very deceptive-looking game, for Black plays so well that he makes the job of defense and counterattack look easy. It isn't!

Evans Gambit

White – Black

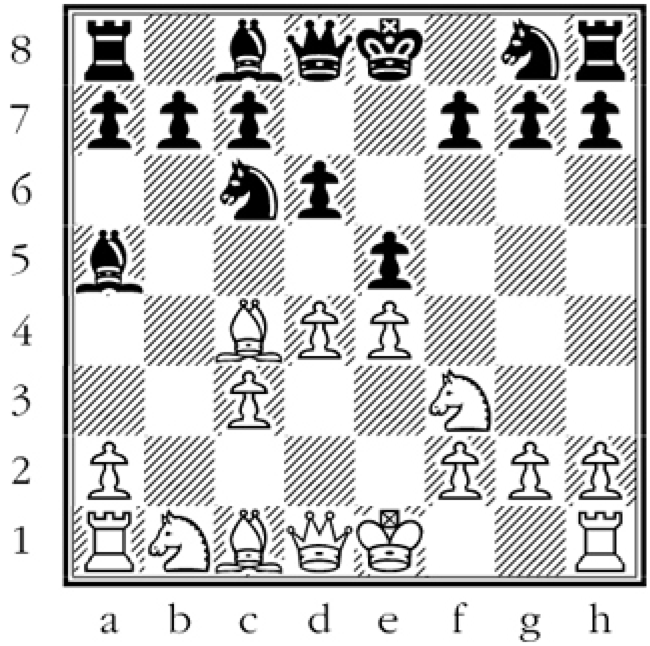
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4

This is one of the most interesting of all the gambits. White offers a pawn in order to build up a strong pawn center and to gain time to get a big lead in development. If Black does not look sharp, he may find himself overwhelmed by a powerful White initiative.

4…Bxb4

In the light of the previous comment, this is a momentous decision. Black is taking on a big responsibility, but, as we shall see from his following moves, he knows how to hold his own.

5.c3 Ba5 6.d4 d6! (D)



33

White to move

With his last move (6…d6!) Black has set his opponent a very difficult problem.

Black's 6…d6! is a good move in the technical sense. Its psychological impact is even greater. By playing this move Black keeps a pawn in the center and prepares for the development of his light-square bishop. So far, so good.

But the move has a deeper meaning. It indicates that Black is prepared, even at this early stage, to return the extra pawn. White can win back his pawn with 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.Qxd8+ Nxd8 9.Nxe5. But in that case the queens are gone and so are White's chances of attack. Black simply continues 9…Be6 with a prosaic endgame that understandably has no attraction for White.

White naturally avoids this simplifying possibility, but he is undoubtedly shaken by the revelation that Black is less interested in material than he is in breaking the attack.

7.Bg5 f6 8.Qb3

Typical play in a gambit; try to upset your opponent with surprise moves. If Black plays 8…fxg5 then 9.Bxg8 (threatening mate) with a wide open position and chances for both sides.

8…Nge7

Black meets the threat in the most economical way – by developing a piece.

9.Bf7+

White wastes a move in order to force Black's king to move and thereby render castling impossible for Black. Ordinarily this would be a very serious defect in the defender's position. Not so here, as Black continues to defend with great care.

9…Kf8 10.Bh5

Threatening 11.Qf7#.

But Black parries the threat easily enough, at the same time making room for the development of his queen.

10…Ng6 11.Be3 Qe7

Notice how Black is concentrating on development of his forces.

12.0-0 Bb6 13.Nbd2 Be6!

Well played. Either White's queen must move off her aggressive diagonal, or White must seal up the center with 14.d5. If he advances the pawn, then there is no chance for him to get an open file for attack.

14.d5

Contrary to appearances, this advance does not cost Black a piece. *Counterattack* is the answer!

14…Na5 15.Qb4 Bd7 16.c4 Nf4!

This represents further progress for Black.

White is now compelled to play the following exchange, which gives Black two bishops against a bishop and knight. As you'll see, the black bishops will become magnificently active, while White's minor pieces will scurry around in search of something to do.

17.Bxf4 exf4 18.Nh4

Black was threatening to win a piece by …g6. Bit by bit we see Black switching from defense to attack.

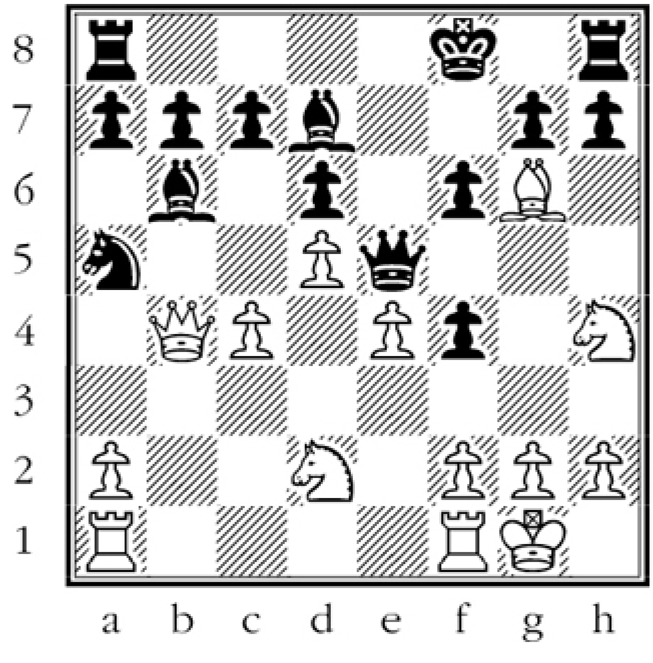
18…Qe5!

A further improvement in Black's position: strong centralization of his queen, attack on White's bishop, and threats on other lines as well.

Black is really forcing the pace now, for if 19.Bf3 Qg5! 20.g3 fxg3 21.hxg3 Qxg3+ and White can resign with a clear conscience.

Hard pressed, White resorts to a "swindle."

19.Bg6!? (D)



34

Black to move

If 19…hxg6?? 20.Nxg6+ wins White's queen. But Black has a much better move, namely?

Of course, Black has no trouble seeing through White's flimsy trap.

But the real danger facing Black is that he will play the attractive 19…Qg5. In that event there follows 20.Ndf3 Qh6 21.Bf5 and – with the decentralization of Black's queen – White's game has improved considerably.

Instead, Black starts a remarkable combination.

19…Bxf2+!!

Forcing White to capture, as he cannot allow 20…Bxh4. Nor can he play 20.Rxf2? as this would lose his queen rook.

20.Kxf2 Qd4+ 21.Ke2

Again Black has forced White's reply. For if 21.Kf3 Qe3# or 21.Ke1 Qxa1+.

21…Bg4+

Remember that Black has to be very sure of what he's doing! For he's sacrificed a piece, and his knight is under attack.

If White tries 22.Ndf3, Black replies 22…Nxc4 maintaining winning pressure. One remarkable possibility is 23.Bf5 g6! (not 23…Bxf5?? 24.Nxd4) 24.Bxg4 Qxe4+ 25.Kd1 (forced) 25…Ne3+ winning White's queen.

22.Nhf3 hxg6 23.Qxa5

Black is still a piece down for several pawns, but his queen is in the thick of the fray, whereas White's queen is useless.

23…Rxh2

A remarkable situation in which the pin by the black bishop prevents White from playing 24.Nxd4 or 24.Nxh2.

24.Rg1 f5!

Beautiful play. If now 25.exf5 Re8+ 26.Kd1 and Black can capture either rook with his queen!

Or 26.Kf1 Qd3+ 27.Kf2 Qe2#.

25.Qxc7 Qe3+

Forcing White's reply, as 26.Kd1 allows 26…Qxg1+.

26.Kf1 fxe4!

For if 27.Nxh2 Qe2#. All this is calculated by Black with a rare combination of verve and accuracy.

27.Qxd6+ Kg8 28.Nxe4 Qd3+! White resigns.

If he plays 29.Kf2 Black winds up with 29…Qxf3+ 30.Ke1 Qe2#.

Or 29.Ke1 Re8! and White's helplessness is pathetic. (Thus, on 30.Nxh2 or 30.Nfd2 Black has 30…Qe2#.)

A masterly example of how the defender brings out his pieces, consolidates his position, and gradually switches to counterattack. Even Black's final attack is a tribute to his earlier maneuvering; for his careful early play is what has made it possible for each Black piece to be on the right square at the right time.

The Precious Half-point

In this game, too, we see wonderfully alert defense and counterattack by Black. True, he "only" draws, but his defensive task is more difficult. This is a case where drawing a game is a creditable achievement, one that you can be proud of.

King's Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4

Black accepts the gambit. He knows he's in for trouble, and he means to fight back as hard as he can.

Right here you can see how important a player's opening attitude is. If he begins in a mood of indifference or ignorance, he may be smashed by the gambit before he ever find out what's happening to him. On the other hand, if he knows the score, he's prepared from the very start to fight hard. Consequently, the resulting difficult positions don't come as a great shock to him.

As you study the further play, you will see how important a role this attitude plays.

3.Nf3 g5

And this move too is a calculated risk. Black defends his advanced f-pawn, which will soon be under attack. However, in providing this protection, Black is weakening his kingside: he has created a breach in his kingside pawn formation.

Later on White will take advantage of his weakness to start a powerful attack in that sector. But Black is well prepared for it.

4.h4

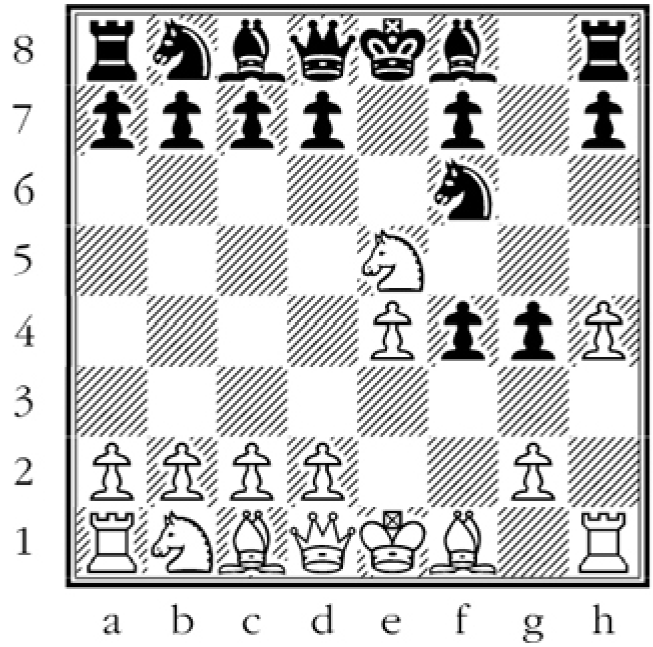
Now the game is already in a critical stage. White breaks up Black's pawn chain so that both advanced black pawns will be liable to capture –

and meanwhile Black's weakness on the kingside persists. (If Black ever castles kingside, his king will be sadly exposed to attack.) **4…g4 5.Ne5**

Now Black can defend his g-pawn with 5…h5. But after 6.Bc4 Nh6 7.d4 White would have a lead in development, a strong center, and the certainty of winning the gambit pawn. Black would have a lasting defensive and the inferior position.

So Black realizes that passive, witless defense will not do. What he wants is: systematic development and counterattack. So…

5…Nf6! (D)



35

White to move

Black must strive for counterattack.

By developing his king knight, Black announces that counterattack will be the keystone of his policy from now on. The game gets very involved as both players fight for the attack.

6.Bc4 d5

Thus he parries the attack against his f7-pawn.

7.exd5 Bg7!

More development!

8.d4

White is ready to play Bxf4.

8…Nh5!

Black guards the threatened pawn and at the same time sets a trap.

If White plays 9.Nxg4? then 9…Ng3! gives Black a winning game. For after 10.Rh2 (necessary to prevent …Qxh4) 10…Qe7+ White is at a loss for a good move.

For instance: 11.Kf2 Bxg4 12.Qxg4 Bxd4+ and mate next move. Or 11.Be2 Bxg4 winning. Or 11.Kd2 Ne4+! 12.Kd3 Bxg4 13.Qxg4 Nf2+ winning the queen.

This whole sequence, you observe, is based on counterattack.

9.Nc3 0-0

Black cannot leave his king in the center, so he castles. But, with his kingside pawns so far advanced, he may easily find himself in a very dangerous position.

10.Ne2

This at last wins back the gambit pawn, opening files on the kingside at the same time. Move by move the situation becomes more critical for Black.

10…f3 11.gxf3 gxf3 12.Nxf3 b5!

This is the kind of move we like to see when we're playing over a game. Such a move comes as a complete surprise; there is a great deal of thought behind it; and for good measure, it's a strong move.

In this case, the idea behind 12…b5! is to give Black strong play on the diagonal leading from a8 to h1. Thus, if 13.Bxb5 Qxd5 with a promising position for Black – quite in line with his ambitions to counterattack.

White, being a very aggressive player, prefers to aim for attack.

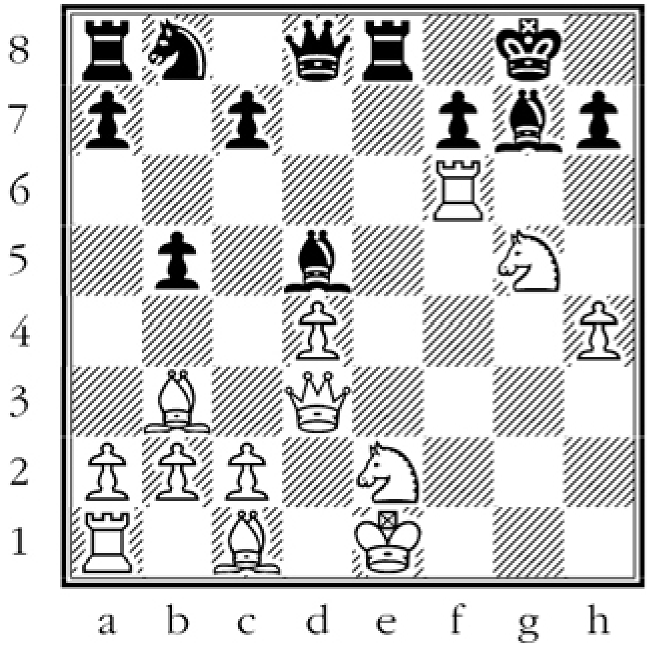
13.Bb3 Bb7! 14.Qd3 Bxd5 15.Ng5! Nf6 16.Rf1

White builds up the attack very skillfully. His immediate threat is 17.Rxf6 followed by 18.Qxh7#. But Black finds ingenious counterplay.

16…Re8!

This creates a flight square for Black's king and consequently lifts the mating threat. In addition, Black's rook at e8 has menacing intentions along the open e-file.

17.Rxf6!? (D)



36

Black to move

Although Black is no longer subjected to a mate threat, he must nevertheless play very resourcefully to hold the game.

Black’s reply is forced, as 17…Qxf6? will not do because of 18.Bxd5.

17…Bxf6 18.Qxh7+ Kf8 19.Nxf7!

A brutal move. If Black replies 19…Bxf7?? then 20.Qxf7#. If he tries 19…Qe7?? (threatening mate) White has 20.Bh6+ and mate next move.

Even; 19…Qd7? will not do, for then comes 20.Bh6+ Ke7 21.Ne5+ and Black loses his queen.

Despite the desperate appearance of his position, Black finds a way out: he resorts to a counter-sacrifice of the exchange!

19…Rxe2+!

One must marvel at Black’s calmness in the face of so many dangers.

20.Kxe2 Qe7+

Here is a subtle point of Black’s defense: if now 21.Kf1? Qxf7 22.Bh6+ Bg7+! and Black remains a piece ahead!

21.Kd3!?

An ingenious move which leads Black astray. Black now sees that after 21…Bxf7? 22.Bh6+ Ke8 23.Re1! Qxe1 24.Qxf7+ followed by 25.Qxf6+ White has a winning attack.

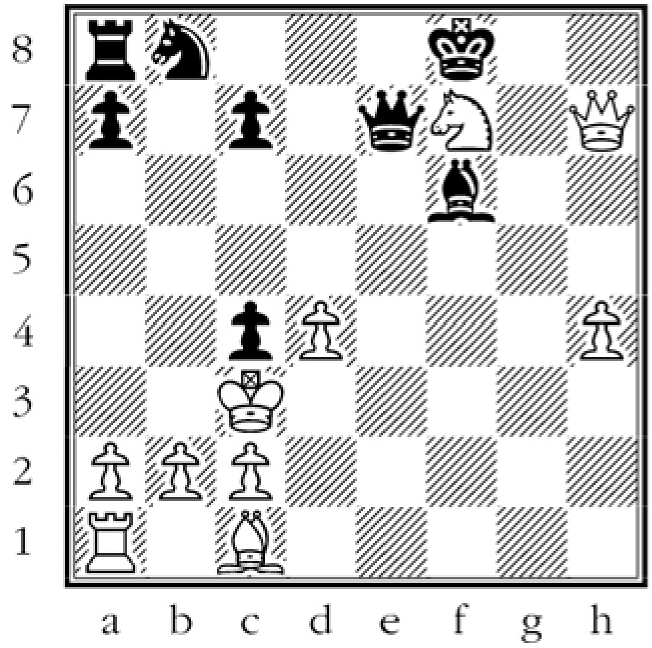
But what Black misses is that after 21…Qxf7! 22.Bh6+ Ke8 23.Re1+ Be7 he has a satisfactory defense as well as a material advantage.

In his search for active counterplay Black misses this fairly obvious point in favor of a subtle defensive resource.

21…Bc4+?! 22.Bxc4 bxc4+

If now 23.Kxc4 Qxf7+ forcing the exchange of queens and leaving Black with a won ending.

23.Kc3! (D)



37

Black to move

Should Black play 23…Qxf7 winning a piece?

It would be very poor judgment on Black’s part now to win a piece by 23…Qxf7 for after 24.Bh6+ White would regain the piece with a winning game: 24…Bg7 25.Qh8+ etc. or 24…K moves 25.Qe4+ winning the black rook.

23…Bxd4+!

Black figures on 24.Kxd4? Nc6+ 25.Kxc4 Ne5+ and the concentrated attack of Black’s pieces is decisive. For example: 26.Kd4 Rd8+! – or 26.Kc3 Qc5+ 27.Kd2 Nxf7 and White is helpless.

24.Kxc4

Now it would be suicide for Black to play 24…Qxf7+? 25.Qxf7+ Kxf7 26.Kxd4, leaving White with two pawns ahead in an easily won ending.

24…Bg7

After this prudent retreat, Black's position looks solid, while White's looks flimsy. However, Black is two pawns down, so both players are satisfied with a draw.

25.Ng5 Nc6 26.Qf5+ Ke8

If now 26…Qf6?? 27.Nh7+ wins the queen.

27.Qg6+

Attacking Black's knight and therefore forcing his reply.

27…Kd7 28.Qf5+ Ke8

At this point the game was abandoned as a draw, for both players realized that discretion is the better part of valor in this position.*

Despite the fact that Black missed a win at move 21, this is a very valuable game to study. In fact, Black's lapse gives the game a more realistic flavor, and makes it more true to life.

The main impression we get from such a game is that a hard-fought draw is in many ways more creditable than an easy win achieved over flabby opposition. Black had to be alert from start to finish; time and again it seemed that he could no longer avoid disaster.

From a game such as this one you can learn how much patience and sheer stubbornness are required to hold out in a difficult defensive position.

Passive Defense Becomes Active

This is the hardest of all defensive achievements: to switch from passive defense, when you are subject to every whim and choice of your opponent. Few problems in chess are more trying; few require more ingenuity, more sheer fighting spirit, than the often arduous job of freeing yourself and asserting your own will. A difficult job, but not an impossible one. The main requirement is to know the score, and know what you want to do. Some players are so overwhelmed by the routine of being on the defensive that they never even think of trying to fight their way out.

In the following game the defense is handled by a great master. Though his position is originally very constricted, he works energetically to achieve a position in which he is attacking instead of defending. The switch comes so suddenly that the opponent is caught off balance.

Queen's Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6

This move is so conventional that we may too easily forget its consequences.

By playing 2…e6 Black makes sure of having a pawn in the center. In this way he prevents White form gaining too much ground in that all-important sector of the board.

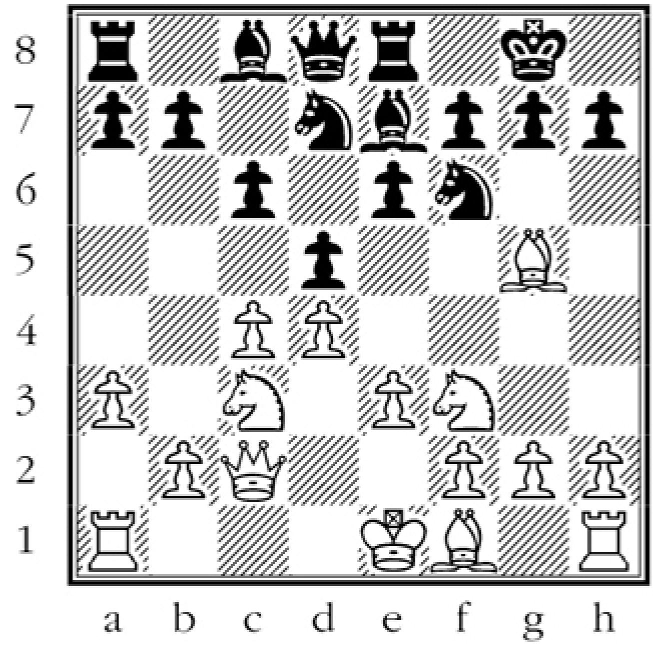
On the other hand, 2…e6 has a very serious drawback. It blocks the development of Black’s light-square bishop. So, even at this early stage Black must keep his wits about him and realize that the restricted mobility of this bishop may cause him a lot of trouble in the future.

To recognize your problems this early in the game is a valuable asset. If you know what your problem is, you can be on the lookout for ways to solve it. Many a player has lost games on the black side of this opening, precisely because he was unaware of the defect in his position. Being unaware of this handicap, he simply drifted along placidly without making any effort to free the imprisoned bishop.

3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7

Now the imprisonment of Black’s light-square bishop seems worse than ever. However, this is only a temporary state of affairs.

5.e3 c6 6.Nf3 Be7 7.Qc2 0-0 8.a3 Re8 (D)



38

White to move

Black's position is extremely constricted.

One look at this diagram shows us the difficulties confronting Black. White's pieces have freedom and scope. Black's forces have developed modestly and are huddled together with very little mobility.

9.Rc1 dxc4

And now, by removing his main center pawn, Black allows his opponent a free hand in the center. (For example, he makes possible such moves as 12.Ne4! and 17.e4, whereby White gains ground in the center and emphasizes the superior aggressiveness of his own formation.) Does this mean that 9…dxc4 is a blunder? Not at all. Black has a very good reason for this move: it is the necessary preliminary to an exchange of pieces. The value of such an exchange will soon become clear to you.

10.Bxc4 Nd5 11.Bxe7 Qxe7

What has happened as a result of the foregoing exchange of pieces? Black has exchanged his rather poorly posted dark-square bishop for White's actively posted bishop. That certainly represents an improvement in Black's game.

Furthermore, as a result of the exchange, Black's queen is now developed at e7. That too is an improvement. This specific example shows why players with constricted positions are advised to seek simplifying exchanges. In this way they get rid of fairly inactive pieces in return for the opponent's active pieces. That's just what has happened here.

12.Ne4!

Following the above reasoning, White purposely avoids another exchange.

12…N5f6 13.Ng3

Black is of course still thinking of how to develop his bishop. At first sight, 13…e5 looks like the answer to all of Black's difficulties, as it opens up the diagonal of his imprisoned bishop. However, after 14.Nf5 Black finds that he is still under pressure in a characterless, backward position that holds out no possibilities for him.

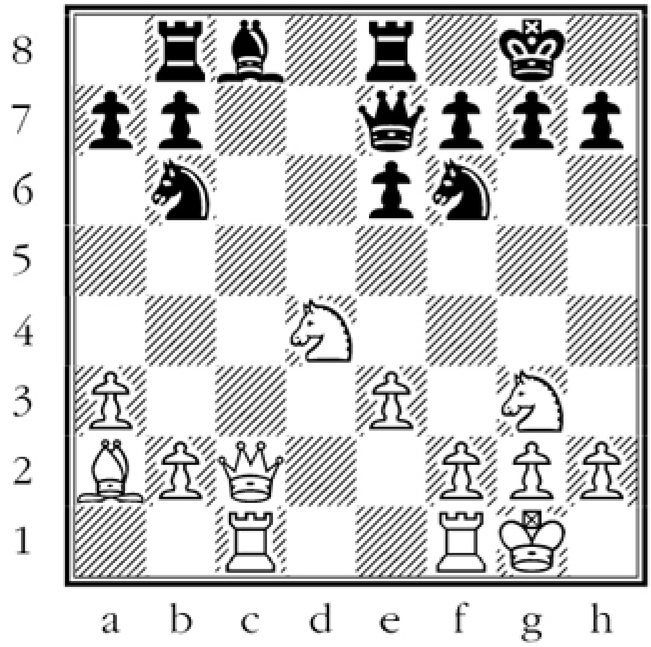
Hence Black bides his time about playing …e5.

13…c5!

An excellent move which holds out a vague promise of freedom for the bishop some day – by an eventual …Bd7 and …Bc6. But the day of liberation is still distant.

14.0-0 cxd4 15.Nxd4 Nb6 16.Ba2 Rb8

A strange-looking move, but Black does not want to commit himself with …e5. We criticize aimless drifting, but purposeful waiting moves of this kind are commendable. (D)



39

White to move

Black has not yet managed to free his game, but his position shows no weak points.

17.e4

This advance in the center has the effect of limiting Black’s mobility, as …Nd5 is impossible. However, Black maneuvers calmly in the small amount of terrain left to him.

17…Rd8 18.Rfd1 Bd7

At last the bishop is developed! But Black still has far to go before he can free himself.

19.e5

Despite its aggressive appearance, this move opens up possibilities which Black is not slow to seize. However, the advance of the pawn sets a subtle positional trap: if now 19…Nfd5 – which looks so natural – White replies 20.Ne4 followed by Nd6 with a very powerful game. With the white knight posted firmly in the heart of Black’s position, Black would be in serious trouble.

19…Ne8!

This move, which few players would find, guards against the danger of Ne4 followed by Nd6.

20.Bb1

Threatening checkmate. Black is forced to weaken his kingside castled position.

20…g6

One must admire the patience with which Black meets every new difficulty!

21.Qe4 Ba4!

At last Black's vigilance is rewarded. The bishop comes into play aggressively.

Of course White could simply reply 22.Rd2, but psychologically the liberation of the bishop is distasteful to him. He therefore drives the bishop back. However, in order to do this, he has to advance pawns, with the result that he creates points of invasion for Black's forces. This will be explained in the following note.

22.b3 Bd7 23.a4

White has had his way. But meanwhile, by advancing his pawns, he has opened up his queenside to possible invasion by the black knights. Later on, when Black's counterattack is at floodtide, he will be able to post his knights aggressively on the b4- and c3-squares. And all this thanks to pawn moves that Black has slyly provoked!

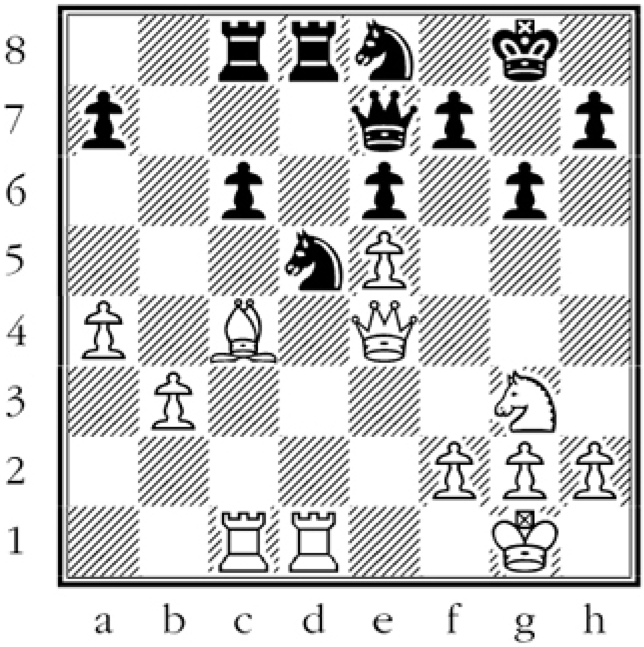
23…Nd5

And note this: as a result of White's aggressive-looking e4-e5, Black is able to post his knight on the "eternal square" d5. Things are beginning to look up for Black.

24.Bd3 Rbc8

Now he threatens to win the exchange with 25…Nc3. (See note to White's 23rd move.)

25.Bc4 Bc6! 26.Nxc6 bxc6 (D)



40

White to move

Black has made headway. He is at last rid of his worrisome bishop, and his knight at d5 is a tower of strength.

27.Rd3 Nb4! 28.Rf3 Rc7!

Preparing to double rooks on the open d-file. The knight has left the excellent square at d5 for an even more aggressive one at b4. But just as Black is at last asserting himself, a new danger looms up: **29.h4**

White will advance this pawn in order to weaken Black’s castled position. So Black still has a hard fight on his hands.

29…Rcd7 30.h5 Qg5!

Counterattack! He threatens Qxc1+.

31.Re1 Rd4!

Counterplay in the open file.

32.hxg6!

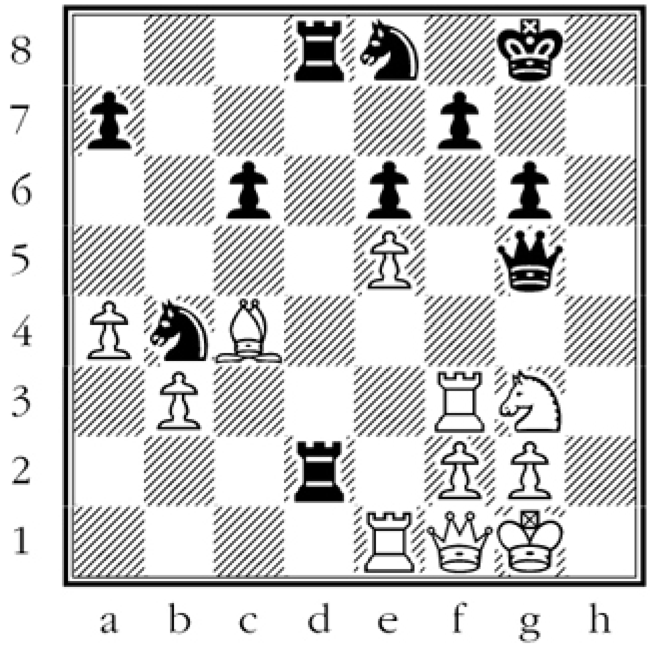
Offering his queen. The idea is: 32…Rxe4? 33.gxf7+ Kf8 (forced) 34.fxe8Q++ Kxe8 35.Nxe4 Qg6 36.Nd6+ Ke7 37.Rf7+. Now Black must give up his queen, and after 37…Qxf7 38.Nxf7 Kxf7 he is a pawn down with a lost ending.

32…hxg6!

Black is not taken in by the queen sacrifice. In fact, he’s preparing a queen sacrifice of his own.

33.Qe2 Rd2! 34.Qf1?

The most judicious line was 34.Qe3, with an even ending after the exchange of queens. But White, who has had the initiative throughout, cannot reconcile himself to equality. This is the turning point of the game. (D)



Black to move

White threatens to win the exchange by Ne4. How does Black meet the threat?

34…Nc2!

Black ignores the threat because he intends to sacrifice his queen.

35.Ne4 Qxe5!!

Now at last Black has shed the role of defender and has seized the initiative. If now 36.Nxd2 Qxe1 and Black is a pawn up in the endgame.

36.Nf6+ Qxf6 37.Rxf6 Nxf6

What are the consequences of Black's combination? He has ample compensation for his queen, having won rook, knight, and pawn in return.

But the main point is that Black is now the attacker and no longer the defender.

38.Rc1 Ne4!

Black's knights dominate the board. The immediate threat is 39…Rxf2, forcing an endgame in which Black is two pawns ahead. White avoids this hopeless ending, but the black knights continue on their merry way.

39.Be2 Nd4! 40.Bf3 Nxf2!

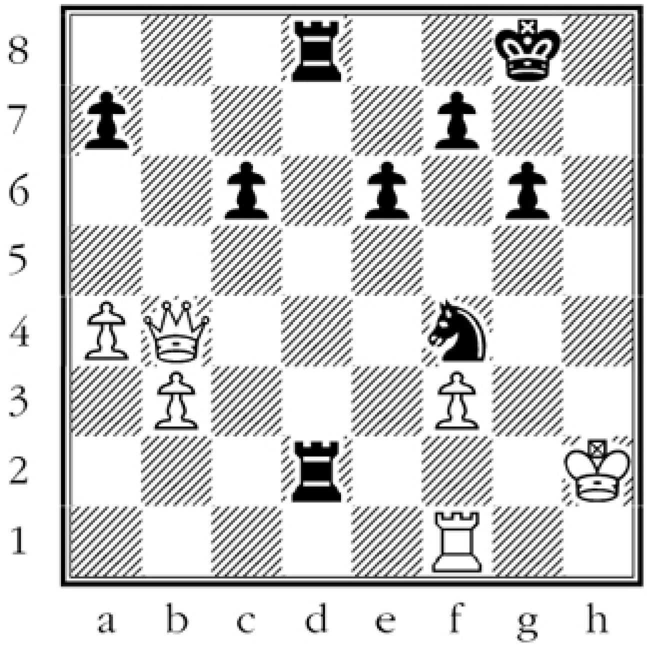
Now the threat is 41…Nxf3+ 42.gxf3 Rd1! forcing an ending in which Black is two pawns ahead.

White escapes this, but the black knights force a decisive penetration into the white king's position:

41.Qc4 Nd3! 42.Rf1 Ne5!

Black forces a decisive breach in the white king's position. Black is not only ahead in material; his forces are more active and he has a winning attack.

43.Qb4 Nexf3+ 44.gxf3 Ne2+ 45.Kh2 Nf4+ (D)



42

White to move

Black now forces the white king back to the first rank.

Now White doesn't like the idea of having his king trapped on the first rank, and hemmed in by Black's powerful rook on the second rank. However, in the event of 46.Kg3, Black has a pretty win with 46…g5! threatening 47…Rg2#.

And no matter how White squirms in this variation, Black has a forced win. Thus if 47.Rf2 Rxf2 48.Kxf2 Nd3+ winning the queen. Nor can White escape with 47.Rg1, for in that case Black plays 47…R8d4! 48.Qb8+ Kg7 49.Qe5+ f6 50.Qc7+ Kg6. Now White is out of checks, and Black winds up relentlessly with …Nh5+ and …Rh4#.

These variations are enjoyable to play over, but there is a moral to them. Black's pieces are making use of the counterattacking resources he developed earlier in the game when his prospects looked much less attractive. That is to say, Black is benefiting by his policy of finding good squares for his knights and setting up his rooks on the d-file. Thanks to those laborious preparations, Black is now master of the whole board.

46.Kh1 R2d4!

It comes as a surprise that Black is giving up the rook's powerful post on the second rank. But his control of the d-file is the compelling factor leading to victory.

47.Qe7 Kg7!

This innocent-looking move suddenly highlights the fact that Black has still another open file at the disposal of his rambunctious rooks – the h-file. And there's a cruel irony in the fact that it was White himself who opened that file while he was following up what he was sure was a winning attack! (See White's 29th, 30th, and 32nd moves.) Black's threat in this position is 48…Rh8+ 49.Kg1 Rd2 50.Rf2 Nh3+ with disaster for White.

48.Qc7

By keeping the knight under attack, White prevents the variation just shown – for Black cannot play …Rd2.

However, since Black's pieces are so magnificently posted, he has no trouble in finding a different way.

48…R8d5!

Notice that Black's admirable attacking play continues to pivot around the open d-file. He has in mind a combined operation with his three pieces which will crush White.

49.Re1 Rg5!

With the nasty threat of winning the white queen by 50…Nd5!. This would attack the queen and also threaten 51…Rh4+ winning the queen in any event. For example, 50…Nd5 51.Qh2 Rh5, pinning the queen.

Nor is 50.Re5 of any use to White, for then comes 50…Rd1+ 51.Kh2 Rg2#.

50.Qxc6 Rd8! White resigns.

Black's last, very quiet move left White no defense. The immediate threat was 51…Rh8#. If White tries 51.Qc3+ e5! 52.Rxe5 then Black has 52…Rh8#.

What a change there has been from Black’s laborious defensive maneuvering in the early part of the game to his crisp, forceful attacking thrusts in the second part! This game is one of the most instructive examples I know of this change from the defensive to the offensive.

I have treated this game in great detail because I think it is important for the student to see what he’s up against, and how he ought to go about solving the problems of practical play. You may not be able to play the defense and counterattack this well, but the game sets a worthwhile goal for you to achieve: how to fight back in a position where your opponent has greater mobility and better prospects.

Chapter Six

Point of No Return

In almost every game of chess there comes a crisis that must be recognized. In one way or another a player risks something – if he knows what he's doing, we call it a "calculated risk."

If you understand the nature of this crisis; if you perceive how you've committed yourself to a certain line of play; if you can foresee the nature of your coming task and its accompanying difficulties, all's well. But if this awareness is absent, then the game will be lost for you, and fighting back will do no good.

One of the things that makes the masters the great players they are is just this awareness of "the point of no return." They know when they have committed themselves irrevocably. At that point they begin to play with all their determination, all their ingenuity. In the following game, for example, the point of no return comes as early as White's fourth move, and as you study his play there is not the slightest doubt in your mind that he's well aware of the crisis.

King's Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.f4 exf4 4.d4!?

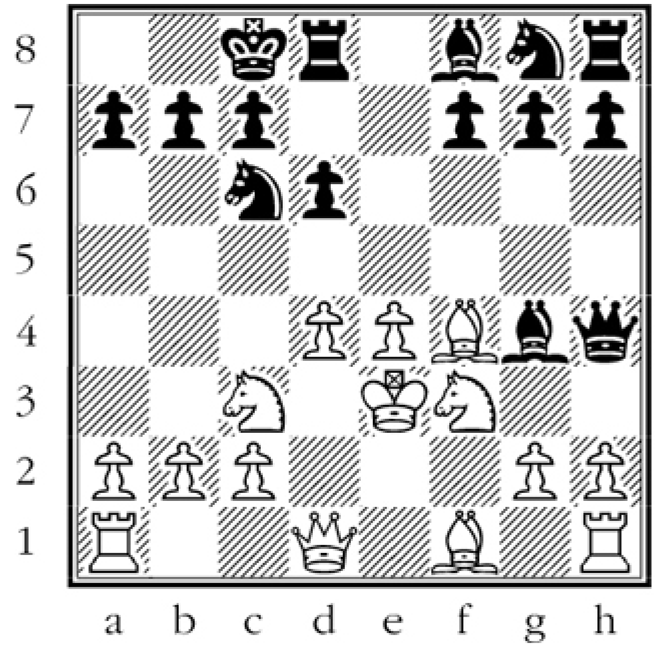
One of the riskiest forms of the King's Gambit, this brings us to the point of no return as far as this game is concerned.

White hastens to form a broad, powerful pawn center, but at the cost of exposing his king to attack. It makes quite a difference in this opening whether White is an inexperienced player who cannot foresee the dangerous consequences of Black's reply, or whether he is a great master who well knows that from now on he must be unremittingly on his guard.

4…Qh4+

The point. Black drives the white king to e2. Thus White has lost the castling privilege, and in addition, he blocks the development of White's light-square bishop. This sounds like the haphazard play of a tyro. And yet, precisely because White knows he's reached the point of no return, he makes these hardships dissolve as if they had never existed.

5.Ke2 d6 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.Bxf4 0-0-0 8.Ke3! (D)



43

Black to move

What does White threaten?

Because White knows that every move must tell in this critical situation, he plays with great resourcefulness. By unpinning his previously pinned knight, he now threatens 9.Nxh4, winning a piece!

But the king move has other important meanings. For example, it protects the bishop at f4, while at the same time making room for the development of the other white bishop.

8…Qh5 9.Be2 Qa5 10.a3! Bxf3 11.Kxf3!

Black expected 11.Bxf3 g5 12.Bg3 Bg7 13.Ne2 h5 14.h3 Nf6 and Black has good attacking possibilities.

But after the surprising king move, White can answer 11…g5 with 12.b4!, so that after 12…Qb6 he has 13.Be3 with a number of powerful threats, such as 14.d5 or 14.Nd5 or 14.Na4, harrying the black queen.

11…Qh5+ 12.Ke3 Qh4 13.b4! g5 14.Bg3 Qh6

Black thinks he has the attack, but he's quite wrong. White has the makings of a very strong attack on the queenside. He has a valuable line for his king rook on the open f-file. He is well ahead in development, and the astonishing fact is that his king is snug and safe behind the rampart of White pawns.

As for Black, his forces are divided and undeveloped. His queen is out of play and will be useless in the coming play.

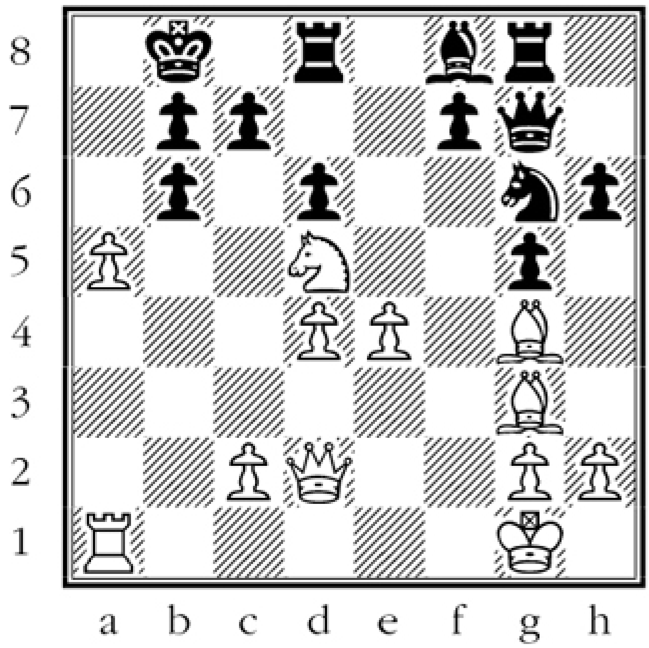
15.b5 Nce7 16.Rf1! Nf6 17.Kf2 Ng6 18.Kg1 Qg7

By now there's no doubt that White has survived the crisis. His king is artificially castled and quite safe. Meanwhile, Black's king is headed for trouble.

19.Qd2 h6 20.a4 Rg8 21.b6!! axb6 22.Rxf6! Qxf6

White's play is very fine. By means of 21.b6!! he forced open an important line to be used in attacking the black king. And with 22.Rxf6! he removed the one black piece which might have hindered the progress of the coming attack.

23.Bg4+ Kb8 24.Nd5 Qg7 25.a5 (D)



44

Black to move

Is 25…b5 a good defense?

White's policy is naturally to open a file against the black king. If Black tries to cross his intentions by playing 25…b5, White still breaks through, thus: 26.a6 b6 27.a7+ Kb7 28.a8Q+ Rxa8 29.Rxa8 Kxa8 30.Nxc7+ Kb7 31.Ne8 Qh8 (what a move!) 32.Qc3 and White must win.

25…f5 26.axb6

Ignoring the attack on his bishop, as he threatens mate beginning with 27.Ra8+!.

26…cxb6 27.Nxb6

Another winning line is 27.Qc3 (threatening 28.Nxb6 and 29.Ra8#). If then 27…Rc8 28.Qa3 decides at once.

27…Ne7

Or 27…Kc7 allowing 28.Qc3+ with crushing effect.

Again and again we must marvel at the skill with which White has changed the scenery. His king is perfectly safe, while Black's king is nothing but a punching bag.

28.exf5

Still menacing. This time he threatens 29.Qc3 Nc6 30.Ra8+ Kc7 31.Nd5+ Kd7 32.f6+ winning Black's queen.

28…Qf7 29.f6!

So that if 29…Qxf6 30.Qc3 Nc6 31.Ra8+ Kc7 32.Nd5#!. Black avoids this, but he soon has to undergo such a grievous loss of material that it might be considered equivalent to resigning.

29…Nc6 30.c4 Na7 31.Qa2 Nb5 32.Nd5 Qxd5 33.cxd5 Nxd4 34.Qa7+ Kc7 35.Rc1+ Nc6 36.Rxc6#

Thus you see how White's superb timing and awareness of the crisis saved the game for him. His alert capture with the king at move 11 was the turning point of the struggle. Very few players could have seen this startling possibility. Credit it all to White's recognition of the point of no return.

In the next and final game, we have one of the finest examples of a crisis which develops toward the end of the opening. Once this point of no return is reached, each player knows exactly where he stands, and exactly what he must do to achieve success and avoid failure. The tension increases to an almost unbearable degree as each player follows his indicated course to the foreordained conclusion.

Queen's Gambit Declined

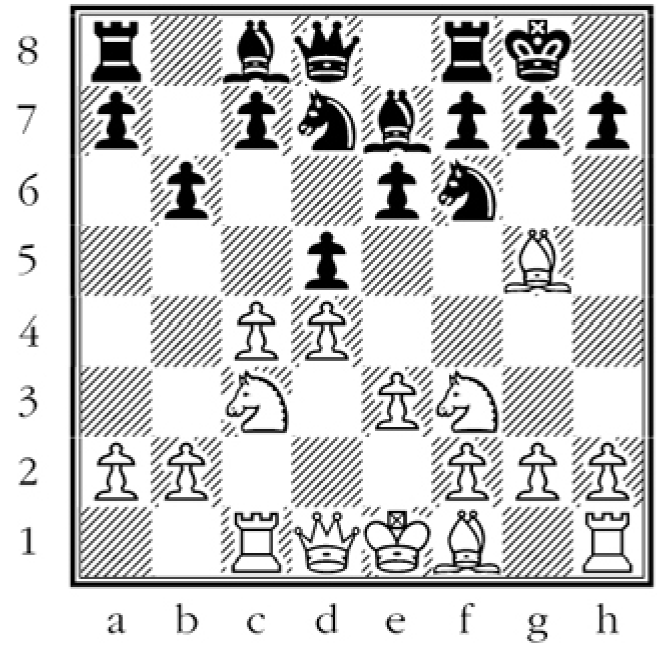
White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7

This is a totally different kind of opening from the one we saw in the previous game. Here there will be no immediate danger for either king; the goals, at least for the time being, will be vaguer, and the chances of coming to grips will be more remote.

5.Nf3 Nbd7 6.Rc1 0-0 7.e3 b6

In order to develop his bishop on the long diagonal. Now the crisis gradually shapes up. (D)



45

White to move

Black tries to solve the problem of developing his light-square bishop.

8.cxd5

Now if Black retakes with his knight, he will allow White to lord it over the center (by means of e3-e4 later on, for example). Black therefore recaptures with his e-pawn, in order to retain a firm grip on the center squares.

8…exd5 9.Bd3 Bb7 10.0-0 c5

If White exchanges pawns at this point, he allows Black some additional freedom. Besides, White wants to plant a centralized knight at the e5-square. For this purpose, he needs to keep his d-pawn at d4.

11.Re1 c4

White has passed the point of no return. He has allowed Black to establish *a queenside majority of pawns*. That is to say, Black’s three queenside pawns (a-, b, and c-pawns) are opposed by White’s two queenside pawns (aand b-pawns). If Black systematically advances his queenside pawns, he will eventually obtain a far-advanced passed pawn.

Unless White is able to set up some countervailing advantage, the black passed pawn will win the game for Black. Since White deliberately allowed this dangerous state of affairs to arise, we say that he's passed the point of no return.

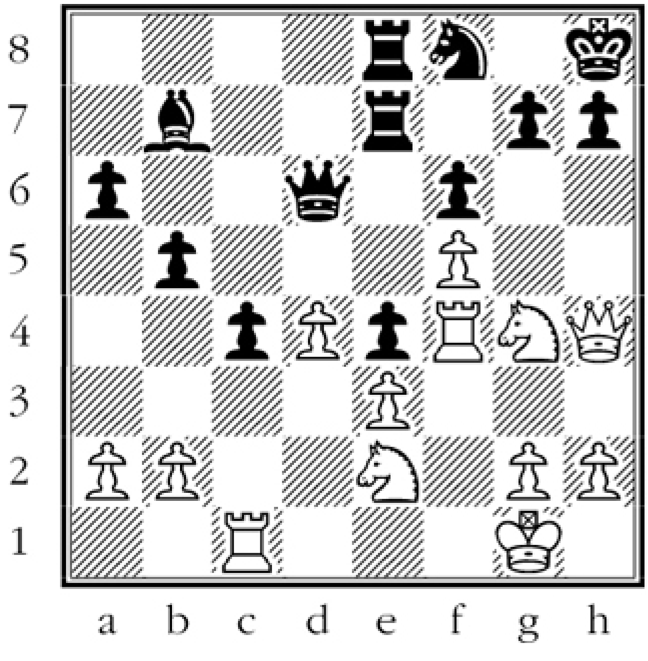
12.Bb1 a6 13.Ne5! b5 14.f4 Re8 15.Qf3 Nf8

Black, you will observe, has set his queenside pawns in motion. What is White's counterplay? To attack on the kingside. So, from now on, you will see that White tries to build up an attack on the kingside. Black wants to prepare the advance of his queenside pawns, but he also needs to take time out to try to construct a foolproof defense for his king.

16.Ne2 Ne4 17.Bxe7 Rxe7 18.Bxe4 dxe4 19.Qg3 f6 20.Ng4 Kh8 21.f5 Qd7

Both sides are making progress, though Black underestimates the dangers of his position and is inclined to proceed too slowly.

22.Rf1 Rd8 23.Rf4 Qd6 24.Qh4! Rde8 (D)



46

White to move

What is the proper plan for White?

If Black is given enough time, he will advance his queenside pawns. White must therefore attack as rapidly as possible on the kingside. The way to do this is to open a file on the kingside by advancing the g-pawn.

White's proper course was therefore 25.Nf2! (making way for the pawn) 25…Bd5 26.g4! h6 (preventing 27.g5) 27.Qg3! (to play up the h-pawn) 27…b4 28.h4! and White is ready to advance 29.g5 as a counterpoise to Black's nasty threats on the queenside.

Instead, White misses the point:

25.Nc3?

This is wrong, as it neglects the possibility of advancing the g-pawn. Aside from that, this knight move is a waste of time, as the knight will soon be driven away by …b4.

25…Bd5 26.Nf2 Qc6 27.Rf1 b4 28.Ne2 Qa4

Now White is hard pressed. To begin with, the threat of 29…Qxa2 has to be met.

29.Ng4!

Very neat. If 29…Qxa2? 30.Nxf6! gxf6 31.Qxf6+ and wins. Black must guard against the threat.

29…Nd7 30.R4f2!

Another brilliant resource, which combines threats on the kingside with indirect defense of the queenside. After 30…Qxa2 31.Nf4 Bf7 32.Ng6+ Bxg6 33.fxg6 White's attack must succeed.

For example: 33…h6 34.Nxh6!! gxh6 35.Qxh6+ Kg8 36.Rf5! whereupon the coming 37.Rh5 decides in White's favor.

Or 33…Nf8 34.Nxf6! gxf6 35.Rxf6 Kg8 36.Rf7 and White wins.

30…Kg8 31.Nc1 c3!

Thus Black at last obtains the dangerous passed pawn whose existence was prophesied by 11…c4. White's situation is now truly desperate.

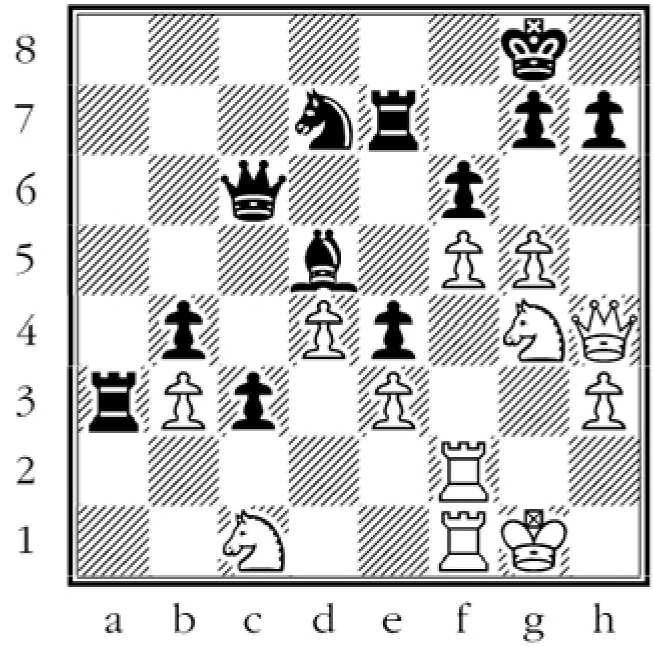
32.b3! Qc6 33.h3 a5 34.Nh2 a4 35.g4 axb3 36.axb3

The tension mounts from move to move. Black must stop for a moment of consolidation to hold back White's attack by 36…h6. Then after 37.Qg3 Nf8! 38.h4 Nh7! White is still unable to play 39.g5. With his kingside attack stymied, he would be truly helpless against Black's queenside attack.

36…Ra8?

This is truly the point of no return for Black. Once he allows White's next move, he is doomed to defeat.

37.g5!! Ra3 38.Ng4! (D)



47

Black to move

White’s ingenious and courageous counterattack saves the game for him.

Black now wins a pawn, which gives him two connected passed pawns on the queenside. Since they need only a few moves to advance to the eighth rank and queen, and since the bulk of White’s forces are on the kingside, it would seem that White is hopelessly lost.

38…Bxb3

After the game, 38…Rxb3, giving up the exchange, was suggested in order to preserve the bishop for defending the kingside. However, this ingenious notion would not have sufficed. For example: 39.Nxb3 Bxb3 40.Rg2 Kh8 41.gxf6 gxf6 42.Ne5! Nxe5 43.dxe5 and now White wins after 43…Rxe5 44.Qh6! – or 43…c2 44.e6! and wins.

But after his last move (38…Bxb3) Black expects 39.Nxb3? Rxb3 40.Rg2 Rb2! and Black’s queenside counterplay wins for him.

Instead, White lets the bishop dangle and gains a valuable tempo:

39.Rg2!

If now 39…fxg5 40.Qxg5 Kf8 41.Nxb3 Rxb3 42.f6 and White’s attack crashes through to victory.

39…Kh8 40.gxf6

If Black tries 40…Nxf6 here, then 41.Ne5 Qe8 42.Ng6+ wins for White.

40…gxf6 41.Nxb3!

An important part of his attack. He now eliminates the bishop, which protects the g8-square.

41…Rxb3 42.Nh6!

Now the absence of the bishop tells cruelly against Black. White threatens 43.Rg8#, and if 42…Re8 43.Nf7#!

42…Rg7

The only move. But White has some beautiful resources.

43.Rxg7 Kxg7 44.Qg3+!!

So that if 44…Kf8 45.Qg8+ Ke7 and 46.Qxb3 – magnificent chess!

44…Kxh6

And now, in the event of the plausible 45.Rf4? Black plays 45…Rb1+, etc. getting a draw by perpetual check.

But White has a resource which he foresaw a good many moves ago.

45.Kh1!!

Threatening 46.Rg1 and 47.Qh4#. Black is lost.

45…Qd5 46.Rg1 Qxf5 47.Qh4+ Qh5 48.Qf4+ Qg5 49.Rxg5 fxg5 50.Qd6+ Kh5 51.Qxd7 c2 52.Qxh7#

In these two thrilling games you have seen telling examples of one of the most important concepts in chess – the crisis which forces a player to continue on a certain course. You have seen the enormous advantage enjoyed by the player who is familiar with the theory of the point of no return. To be unaware of this critical point leaves the attacker, as well as the defender, at the mercy of his opponent. To possess this knowledge gives you the most valuable, and perhaps least understood, of all the weapons you can use to fight back when you’re hard pressed by enemy attack.

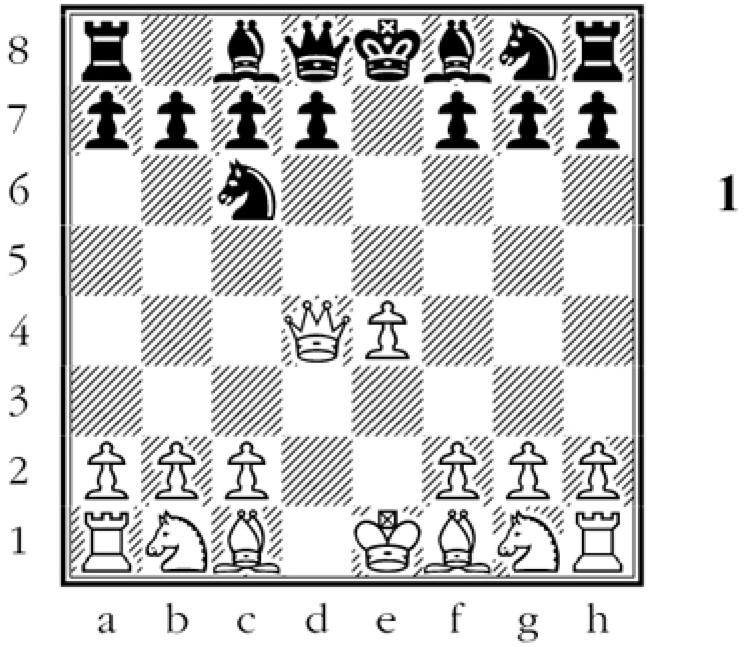
Book Seven

How to Play the e-pawn Openings

Center Game

White’s game is discredited from the very start by his premature development of the queen. This enables Black to seize the initiative at move 3 by counterattacking against the white queen. *Not recommended for White.*

Center Game
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.Qxd4 Nc6 (D)



Position after 3…Nc6

Black’s gain of time enables him to take the lead in development.

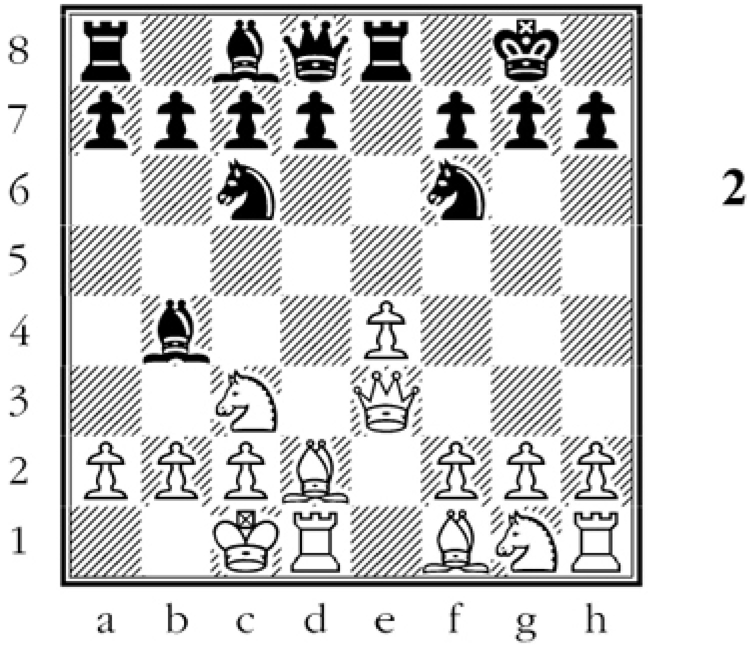
4.Qe3 Nf6 5.Nc3

An amusing sample of White’s difficulties is 5.Bc4 Ne5 6.Bb3 Bb4+ 7.c3? Bc5! 8.Qg3?? Bxf2+!! and Black wins the queen by a knight fork.

5…Bb4

Another way is 5…Be7 6.Bd2 d5 7.exd5 Nxd5 8.Nxd5 Qxd5 and Black’s game is decidedly freer.

6.Bd2 0-0 7.0-0-0 Re8 (D)



Position after 7…Re8

White’s most likely moves are 8.Qg3 or 8.Bc4.

8.Qg3!?

If White tries 8.Bc4 now, Black can win a pawn with 8…Bxc3 9.Bxc3 Nxe4 (not 9…Rxe4?? 10.Bxf6! winning).

But then White has fairly good attacking prospects after 10.Qf4 Nf6 11.Nf3 d6 12.Ng5 Be6 13.Bd3.

Therefore Black answers 8.Bc4 by 8…Na5! 9.Bd3 d5! with a fine initiative. This explains White’s pawn sacrifice on the next move.

8…Nxe4 9.Nxe4 Rxe4 10.Bf4 Qf6! 11.Nh3

If 11.Bxc7? d6! 12.Bxd6 Qh6+! 13.Kb1 Bxd6 14.Qxd6 Qxd6 and wins.

11…d6 12.Bd3 Re8

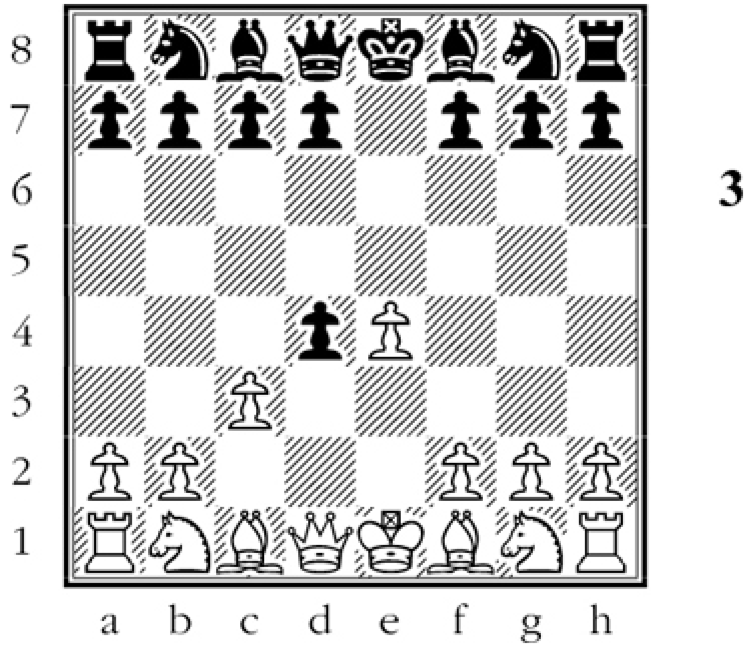
Black is a pawn ahead with a perfectly safe game. (He can also try the more complicated 12…Nd4! 13.Be3 Rg4 14.Bxd4 Rxd4 15.c3 Bxc3! 16.bxc3 Rg4 17.Qe3 Qxc3+ 18.Bc2 Qxe3+ 19.fxe3 Rxg2 with a won ending thanks to his four pawns for the piece.) ***Danish Gambit***

This dashing attempt to seize the attack by sacrificing two pawns can yield White a very powerful attack if Black does not defend carefully. However, as you will see, Black has several satisfactory defenses. Consequently, the Danish should be ventured only against weak opponents.

Danish Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 (D)



Position after 3.c3

Black’s simplest course is now 3…d5! 4.exd5 Nf6! 5.c4 c5 (or even 5…c6!) with an excellent game.

3…dxc3 4.Bc4

If White decides to sacrifice only one pawn by 4.Nxc3, Black is safe enough after 4…d6 5.Bc4 Nc6.

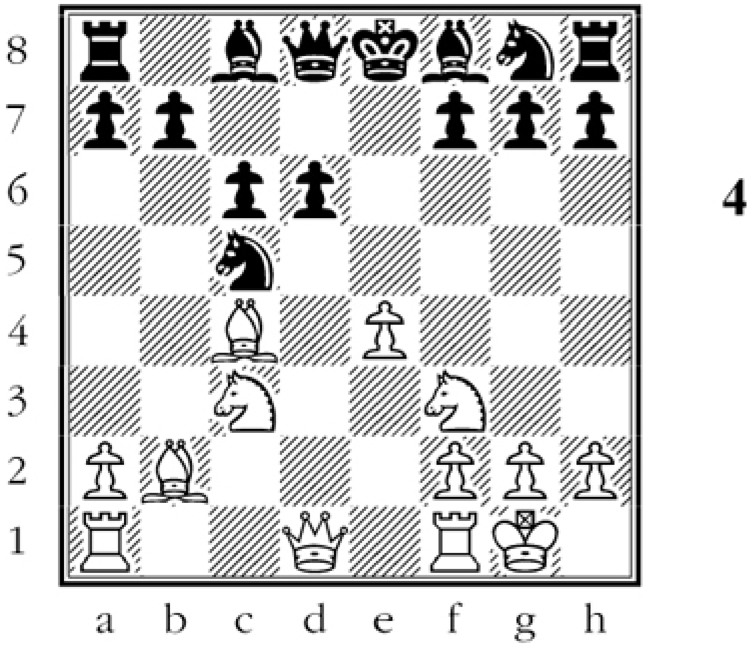
Black has nothing to fear from 6.Qb3 because of 6…Ne5!. Somewhat more troublesome for him is 6.Nf3 Be6! 7.Bxe6 fxe6 8.Qb3 Qc8 9.Ng5 Nd8 10.f4 Be7 11.0-0 Bxg5 12.fxg5 Ne7 13.Be3 Nf7 14.Rf2 0-0 15.Raf1 Ng6!. Black is still a bit uncomfortable, but the extra pawn must tell in his favor.

4…cxb2 5.Bxb2

The classic position of the Danish Gambit.

Even simplifying and returning the extra material may not give Black a safe game: 5…d5 6.Bxd5 Nf6 7.Bxf7+! Kxf7 8.Qxd8 Bb4+ 9.Qd2 Bxd2+ 10.Nxd2 c5 11.Ngf3 Be6 12.Ng5+ Ke7 13.Nxe6 Kxe6 14.f4. White will castle queenside and advance his formidable mass of kingside pawns. Black is in trouble.

5…c6! 6.Nc3 d6 7.Nf3 Nd7 8.0-0 Nc5 (D)



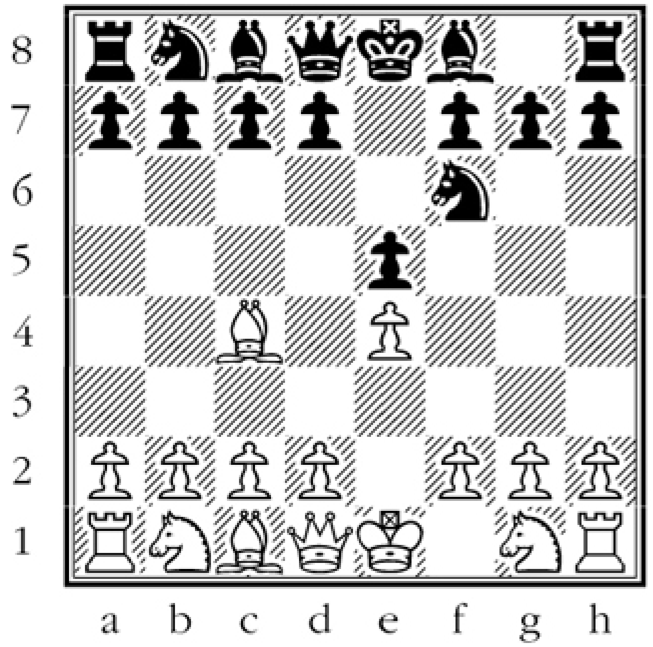
Position after 8…Nc5

Black’s position, though somewhat cramped, is unassailable. After …Be6 he can catch up in development, and eventually his two extra pawns must win for him.

Bishop’s Opening

This opening is considered inferior because it allows Black to seize the initiative by playing 2…Nf6 with counterattack. However, Black must be on the alert for *transpositions* into other openings that may produce an unpleasant surprise.

Bishop's Opening
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nf6 (D)



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Position after 2…Nf6

White's colorless second move has enabled Black to take the offensive. White can try 3.Nc3, transposing into the Vienna Game.

3.d3 c6

Continuing his aggressive policy by preparing …d5. (If 3…Bc5 4.f4 transposes to the King's Gambit Declined, page 223.) Should White try to seize the initiative with 4.f4 there follows 4…exf4 5.Bxf4 d5! 6.exd5 Nxd5 with a fine game for Black.

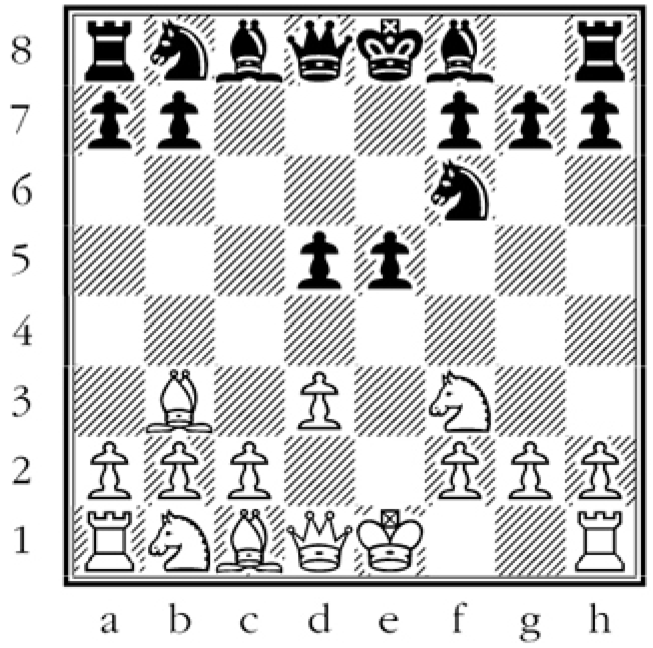
And on 4.Qe2 Black gets a splendid attack at the cost of a pawn: 4…Be7 5.f4 d5! 6.exd5 (6.fxe5 Nxe4! is also good for Black) 6…exf4

7.dxc6 Nxc6 8.Bxf4 0-0 9.Nc3 Nd4 10.Qd2 and now Black has 10…Bb4 with an excellent game – or 10…a6 11.Nge2 b5 12.Nxd4 Qxd4 13.Bb3 Bb4 14.0-0-0 a5! with a winning attack.

4.Nf3 d5!

Black has an unbearably cramped game after 4…d6?.

5.exd5 cxd5 6.Bb3 (D)



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Position after 6.Bb3

The subtle point of Black’s play is that after 6…Bb4+! White cannot interpose 7.Nc3? because of 7…d4!.

6…Bb4+! 7.c3 Bd6 8.Bg5 Be6 9.d4 e4 10.Ne5 Nc6 11.Nxc6

If 11.f4 h6! 12.Bh4 g5! 13.fxg5 Bxe5 14.dxe5 Ng4! with a powerful game for Black.

11…bxc6 12.f3

After 12.0-0, Black escapes from the pin with 12…Qc7!.

12…h6 13.Bh4

Not 13.Bxf6 Qxf6 14.fxe4? Qh4+ etc.

13…g5 14.Bf2 exf3 15.Qxf3 Ne4

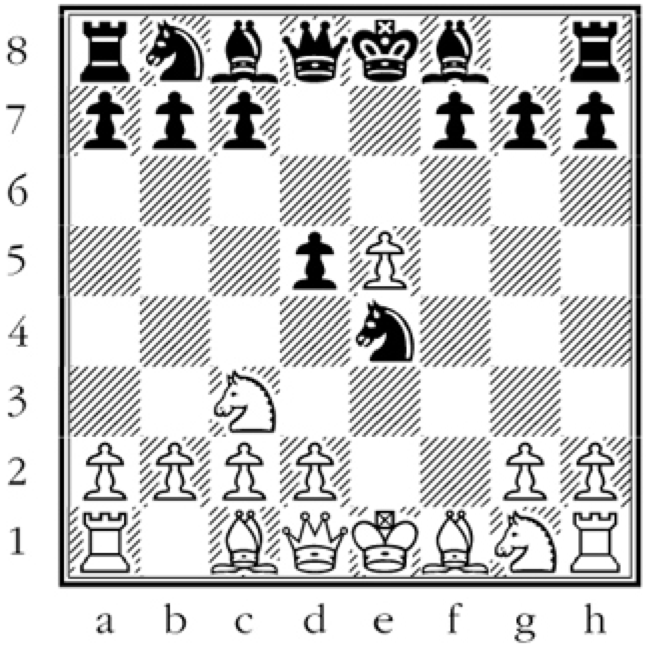
Black’s position is more aggressive, and therefore more promising.

Vienna Game

As in the Bishop’s Opening, White gives Black a chance to counterattack with 2…Nf6. The struggle for control of the center is a very lively one. This opening always leads to interesting play because of the sharp clash of ideas.

(a) 3.f4 Variation

Vienna Game
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.fxe5 Nxe4 (D)



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Position after 4…Nxe4

If now 5.Qf3 Nc6! 6.Bb5 (not 6.Nxe4? Nd4! 7.Qd3 dxe4 8.Qxe4 Bf5!) 6…Nxc3 7.bxc3 Qh4+ 8.g3 Qe4+ with a favorable endgame for Black.

5.Nf3 Be7 6.d4 0-0 7.Bd3 f5! 8.exf6 Bxf6!

If now 9.0-0 Nc6 and Black maintains material equality. Nor can White capture twice on e4 without losing a piece. *The position is even.*

(b) 3.Bc4 Variation

Vienna Game
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Bc4 Nxe4!?

Leads to wild and woolly chess. A quieter and perfectly satisfactory alternative is 3…Nc6 4.d3 Na5 5.Bb3 Nxb3 6.axb3 Bb4 etc.

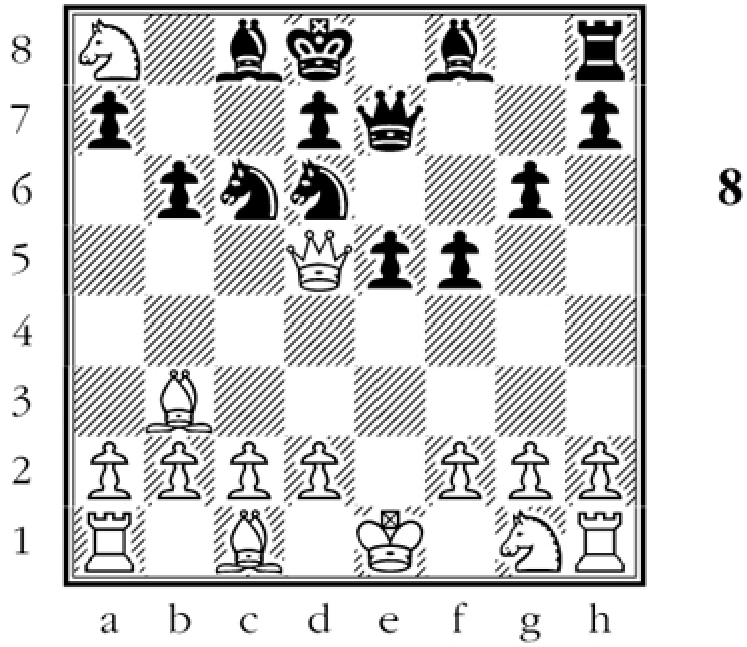
4.Qh5

Threatens mate. The tame 4.Nxe4 is good for Black (4…d5! etc.).

4…Nd6 5.Bb3 Nc6

So far so good, but now White again threatens mate, forcing Black to give up the exchange.

6.Nb5!? g6 7.Qf3 f5 8.Qd5 Qe7 9.Nxc7+ Kd8 10.Nxa8 b6 (D)



Position after 10…b6

A very unclear situation, despite all the analysis that has been lavished on it.

After 11.d3 Bb7 12.h4 f4! (stops Bg5) Black has a powerful attack for his minus material. Thus, if 13.Qf3 Nd4 14.Qh3 Bh6 15.Bd2 e4 *with a winning game for Black.*

On the other hand, after 11.Ne2! Bb7 12.Qf3 Nd4 13.Nxd4! Bxf3 14.Nxf3 *White's material advantage should win for him.*

One thing is certain: White's repeated queen moves leave him with a dangerously retarded development.

King's Gambit

This is the classic attacking line in the e-pawn openings. White offers a pawn early in the opening in order to obtain a powerful pawn center and an attack via the f-file. Superior development for White generally gives him a winning attack. Superior development for Black generally gives him a winning defense.

(a) King's Knight's Gambit with 3…g5

This is the oldest and most complicated form of the King's Gambit.

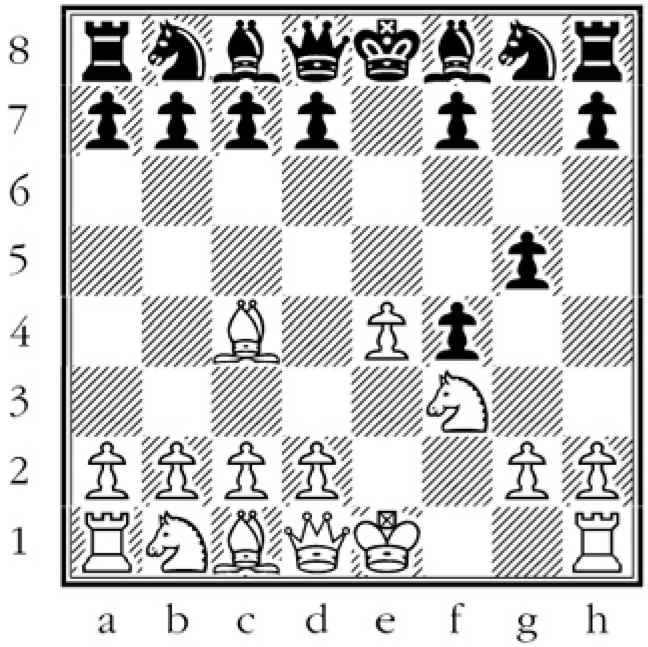
King's Gambit
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 g5

Black's idea is to guard the gambit pawn at f4.

White can try to break up the black pawn formation with 4.h4, but Black has a good reply in 4…g4, driving the knight back. If then 5.Ng5?! h6 and White is forced to play 6.Nxf7 (Allgaier Gambit), which leaves him with inadequate material for the knight after 6…Kxf7.

More reasonable is 5.Ne5 (Kieseritzky Gambit); but after 5…Nf6 6.Bc4 d5! 7.exd5 Bg7 8.d4 Nh5! Black has a splendid game.

4.Bc4 (D)



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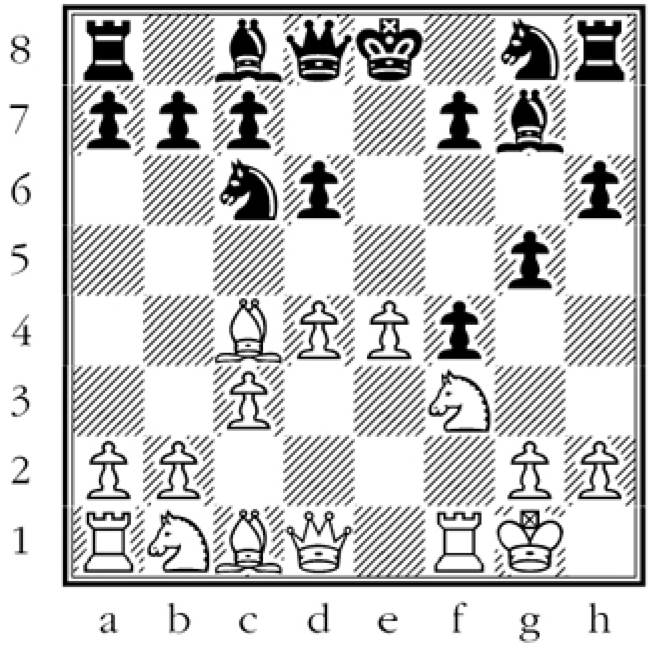
Position after 4.Bc4

White aims to develop quickly, while Black hopes to maintain his extra pawn safely.

Black must be wary hereabouts. The over-anxious 4…f6?? leads to disaster after 5.Nxg5! fxg5 6.Qh5+ Ke7 7.Qf7+ Kd6 8.Qd5+ Ke7 9.Qe5#.

After 4…g4 (too hasty) 5.0-0!? gxf3 we have the famous Muzio Gambit. Then, after 6.Qxf3 White has a magnificent development in return for his sacrificed piece. Black does well to avoid this hazardous line of play. Therefore: **4…Bg7 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 h6 7.c3 Nc6** (D)



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Position after 7…Nc6

Black's sober development has given him a solid position which seems shatterproof.

8.g3

Logical: he tries to break up Black's pawn chain. Naturally Black does not oblige by replying 8…fxg3 and thus opening the f-file for White.

8…Bh3!

By attacking White's rook, Black gains time to complete his development. *The game is complicated, with approximately even chances.*

(b) Cunningham's Gambit

This line and variation are favored by modern players as being simpler and less risky than Variation (a).

King's Gambit
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 Be7

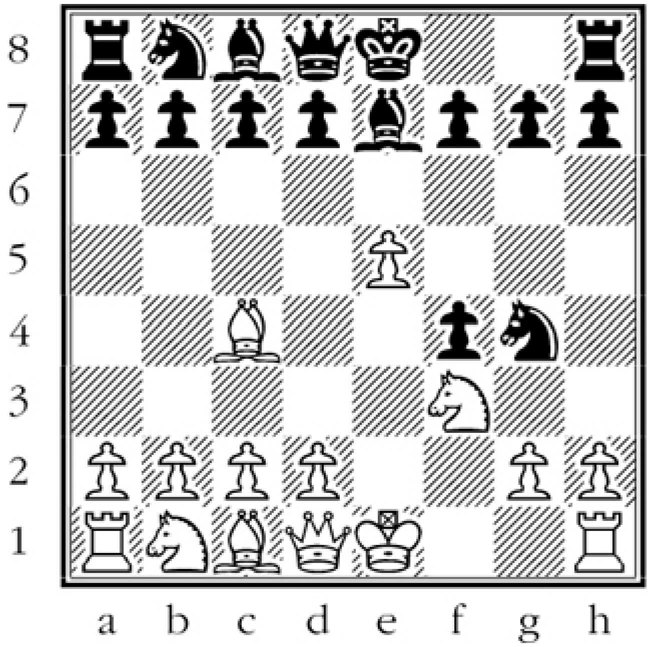
There is more to this innocent looking move than meets the eye, for if 4.d4? Bh4+ and White’s king is forced to a bad square.

4.Bc4

As usual, a developing move is best. If now 4…Bh4+ 5.Kf1 and White stands well despite the loss of castling. Black continues the policy of sound development with: **4…Nf6**

If now 5.d3 d5! with an excellent game.

5.e5 Ng4! (D)



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Position after 5…Ng4!

Black’s advanced knight is well placed. For example 6.Nc3 Nc6 7.d4 d6! 8.h3? Bh4+! 9.Kf1 Nf2! and Black wins.

6.0-0 Nc6

Also good is 6…d6 7.exd6 Qxd6 and Black has a fine development with nothing to fear.

7.d4 d5

If now 8.Bd3 g5! and Black stands well.

8.exd6 Bxd6 9.Re1+ Ne7 10.h3 Nf6

Black has a splendid position, and White still has the vexing problem of recovering the gambit pawn.

(c) King's Knight's Gambit with 3…d5

King's Gambit

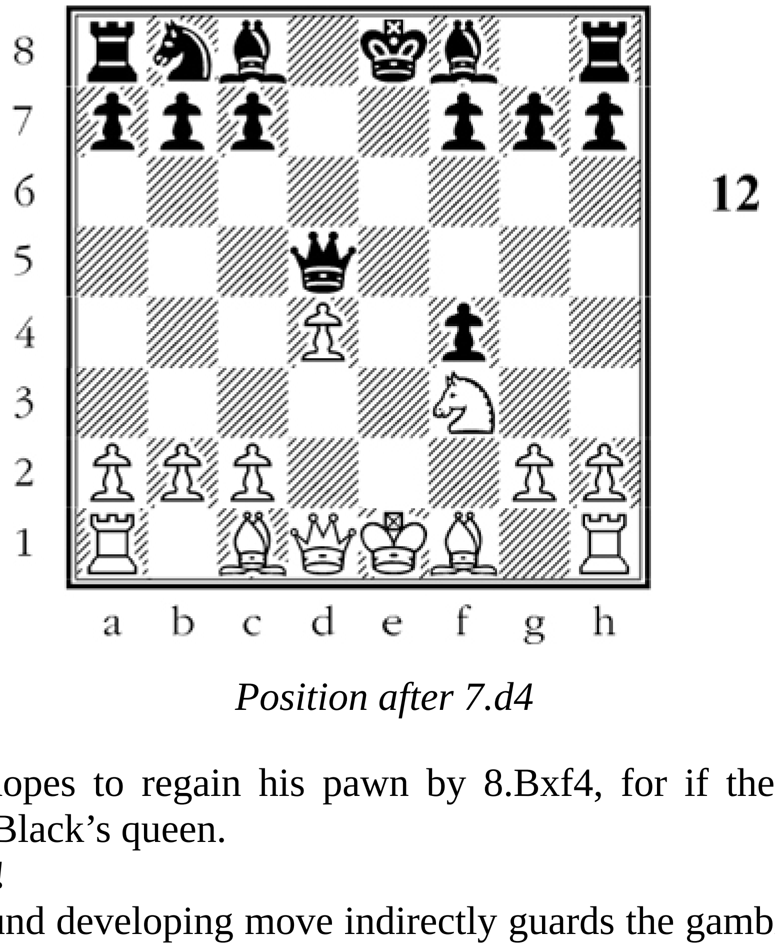
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 d5 4.exd5 Nf6 5.Nc3

White can now try to complicate matters with 5.Bb5+, but Black simply replies 5…c6, with a splendid game after 6.dxc6 bxc6 7.Bc4 Nd5!.

For example 8.Qe2+ Be7 9.d4 0-0 10.Bxd5 cxd5 11.Bxf4 Ba6!. Or 8.0-0 Bd6 9.Qe2+ Be6 and Black has a fine game.

5…Nxd5 6.Nxd5 Qxd5 7.d4 (D)



Position after 7.d4

White hopes to regain his pawn by 8.Bxf4, for if then 8…Qe4+ 9.Qe2 pins Black's queen.

7…Be7!

This sound developing move indirectly guards the gambit pawn, for if 8.Bxf4?? Qe4+ wins the bishop.

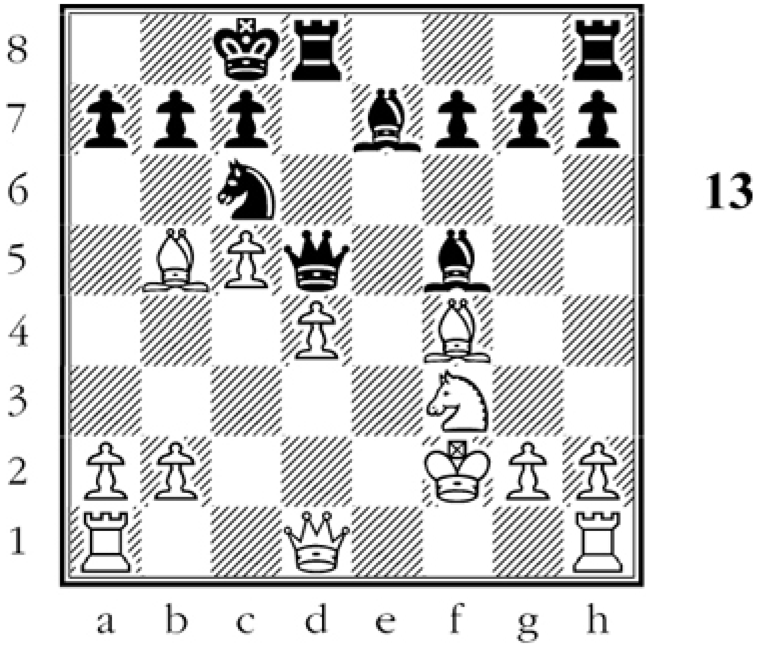
8.c4 Qe4+ 9.Kf2 Bf5 10.c5

With the powerful threat of 11.Bb5+ followed by 12.Re1.

10…Nc6! 11.Bb5 Qd5!

Prudently removing his queen from the open e-file.

12.Bxf4 0-0-0 (D)



Position after 12…0-0-0

Black has a fine game because of his pressure on White’s weak d-pawn. If now 13.Be3 Bf6! etc.

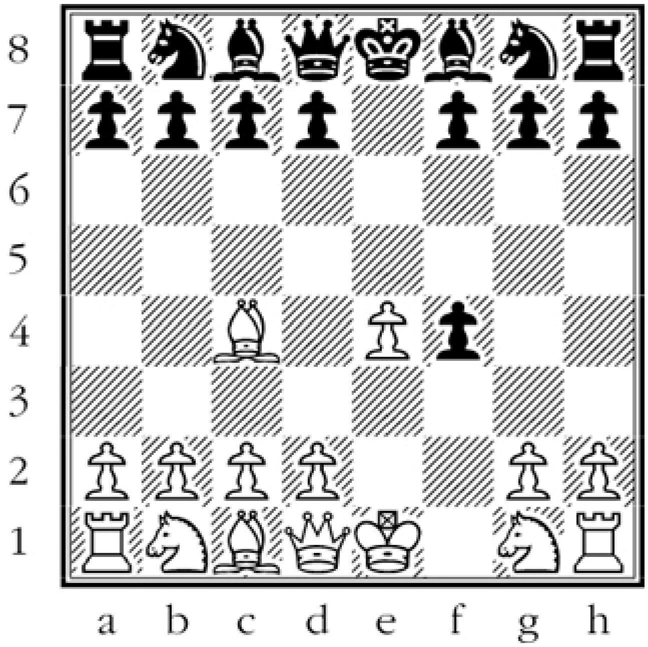
Black has escaped unscathed and has a fine game. A remarkable variation here is 14.Qa4 Be4! with this possibility: 15.Bxc6 Qxc6 16.Qxa7 Bxf3 17.gxf3 Bxd4! 18.Bxd4 Rxd4 19.Qa8+ Kd7 20.Qxh8 Qxc5! and though Black is a rook down, he has a winning attack!

(d) King’s Bishop’s Gambit

King’s Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Bc4 (D)



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Position after 3.Bc4

This opening is out of fashion as Black has easy counterplay with …Nf6 and …d5.

3…Nf6! 4.Nc3 c6!

Preparing the counter-thrust …d5!. If now 5.e5 d5! with an aggressive game for Black.

5.Qf3

Vainly trying to stop Black's next move. If instead 5.d4 Bb4! 6.Qf3 d5! 7.exd5 0-0! and Black is well ahead in development.

5…d5! 6.exd5 Bd6 7.d3 Bg4 8.Qf2 0-0

Black's marked lead in development gives him much the better game. A plausible continuation to emphasize this advantage is the following: **9.Bxf4 Re8+ 10.Kf1 b5 11.Bb3 b4 12.Nce2 Nxd5 13.Bxd5 cxd5 14.Qg3 Bxe2+ 15.Nxe2 Qf6!**

Black wins, his chief threat being 16…Rxe2!.

The moral of all these variations is that if Black fosters his development carefully and avoids confusing complications, he remains with much the better game.

King’s Gambit Declined

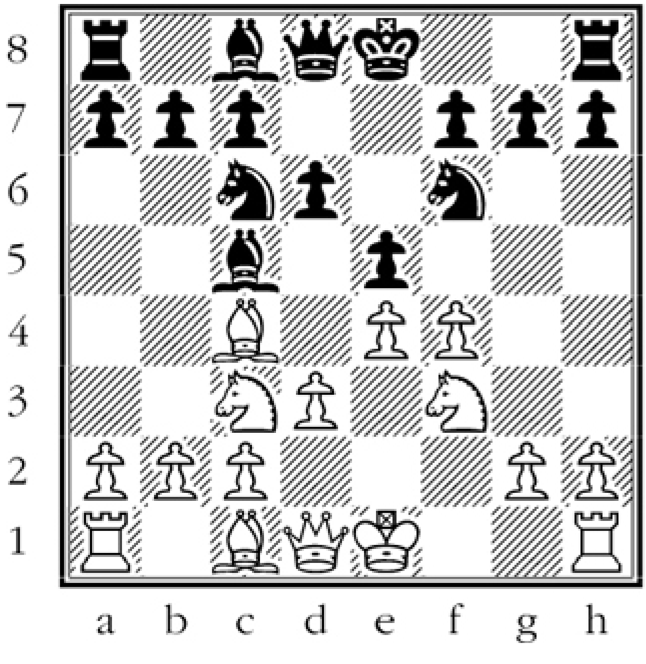
By refusing to accept the gambit, Black hopes to avoid prepared variations and dangerous attacks. In general, therefore, the play in this opening is less critical than in the gambit accepted.

(a) 4.Bc4 Variation
King’s Gambit Declined
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 Bc5

The key move to the whole situation. If now 3.fxe5?? Black has the crushing reply 3…Qh4+ forcing checkmate or winning a rook.

3.Nf3 d6 4.Bc4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.d3 (D)



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Position after 6.d3

Black can try the aggressive but risky course 6…Bg4 7.Na4 Bxf3 8.Qxf3 Nd4 9.Qg3!? with highly complicated play. The following recommendation is safer and simpler by far.

6…Be6!

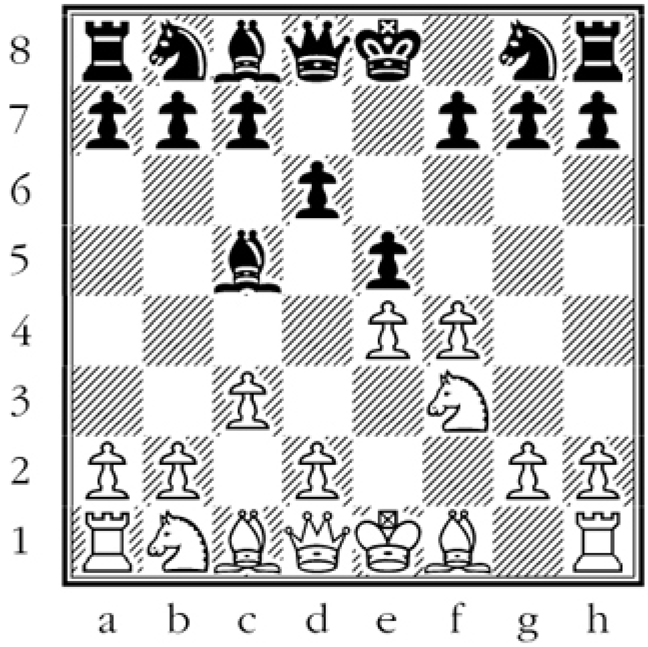
Even game. Black has nothing to fear after 7.Bxe6 fxe6; while if 7.Bb5 a6 8.Bxc6+ bxc6 9.f5 Bc8 he has two serviceable bishops and the freeing move …d5.

(b) 4.c3 Variation

King's Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.f4 Bc5 3.Nf3 d6 4.c3 (D)



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Position after 4.c3

White hopes to build a strong pawn center by continuing with d2-d4. Black must counterattack precisely.

4…Nf6!

Better than 4…Bg4 5.fxe5! dxe5 6.Qa4+! Bd7 (forced) 7.Qc2 and White's game is freer. Likewise after 4…f5 5.fxe5 dxe5 6.d4! exd4 7.Bc4! Nf6 8.e5 Ne4 9.cxd4 Bb4+ 10.Bd2 Bxd2+ 11.Nbxd2 Nc6 12.d5 Black's game is very difficult because White's center pawn position is so powerful.

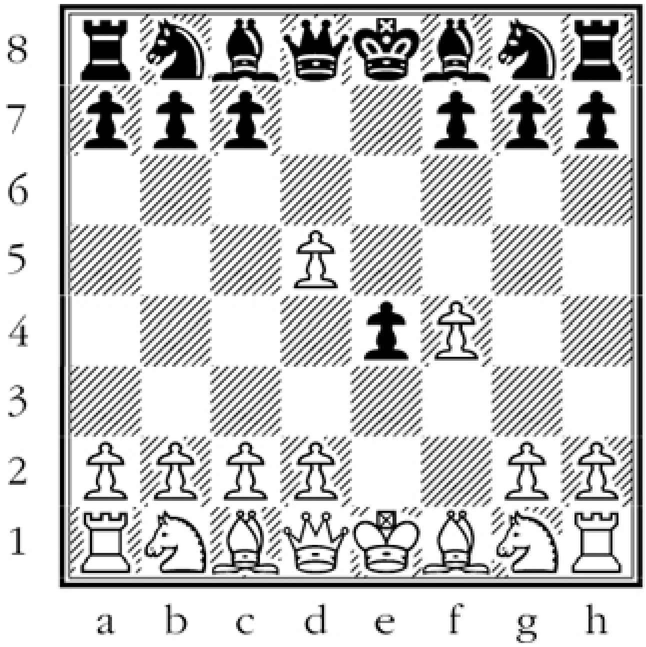
5.fxe5 dxe5 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 Bb6! 8.e5 Nd5 9.Bc4 Be6 10.Qb3 0-0

Even game, in view of the strong position of Black's knight at d5. Though White's pawn center looks formidable, it may become weak *later on after a well-timed …f6.*

Falkbeer Counter Gambit

Counter gambits must be viewed with skepticism. It is generally doubtful that Black can snatch the initiative at an early stage. In this opening, for example, Black's policy of temporarily – and in some cases permanently – sacrificing a pawn, does not seem to be justified.

Falkbeer Counter Gambit
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.f4 d5 3.exd5 e4 (D)



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Position after 3…e4

This is the position Black aims for with his key second move. Black hopes to use his e-pawn as a stumbling block to White's development. Hence White's reply.

4.d3 Nf6

After 4…exd3 5.Qxd3 Nf6 6.Nc3 Bc5 7.Bd2 0-0 8.0-0-0, Black has no compensation for the lost pawn.

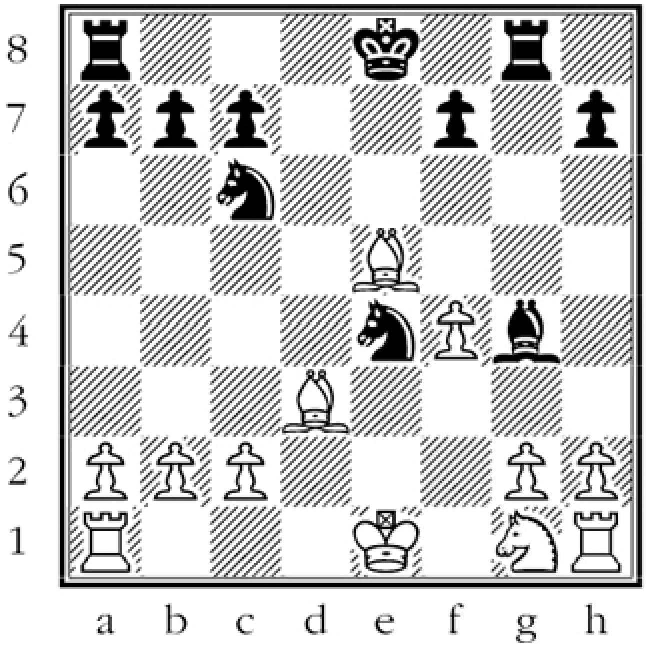
5.Qe2!

The pin on the e-pawn is very effective.

If instead 5.Nd2 Black gets a good game with 5…exd3 6.Bxd3 Nxd5 etc.

5…Qxd5 6.Nc3 Bb4 7.Bd2 Bxc3 8.Bxc3 Bg4 9.dxe4! Qxe4 10.Qxe4+ Nxe4 11.Bxg7 Rg8 12.Be5 Nc6 13.Bd3

Black has no compensation for the pawn minus. (D)



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Position after 13.Bd3

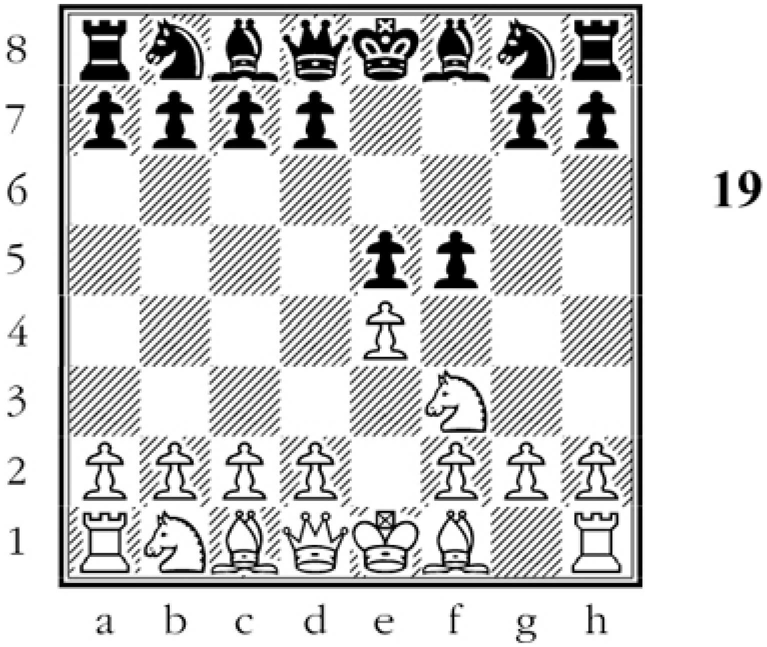
White’s extra pawn gives him the advantage.

Latvian Gambit

There is another counter gambit – an early attempt by Black to wrest the initiative from White. As such, it is suspect. What makes this counter gambit all the more dubious is that it is foolishly adopted as a reply to what is undoubtedly White’s strongest *developing* move, 2.Nf3.

Latvian Gambit
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 f5 (D)



Position after 2…f5

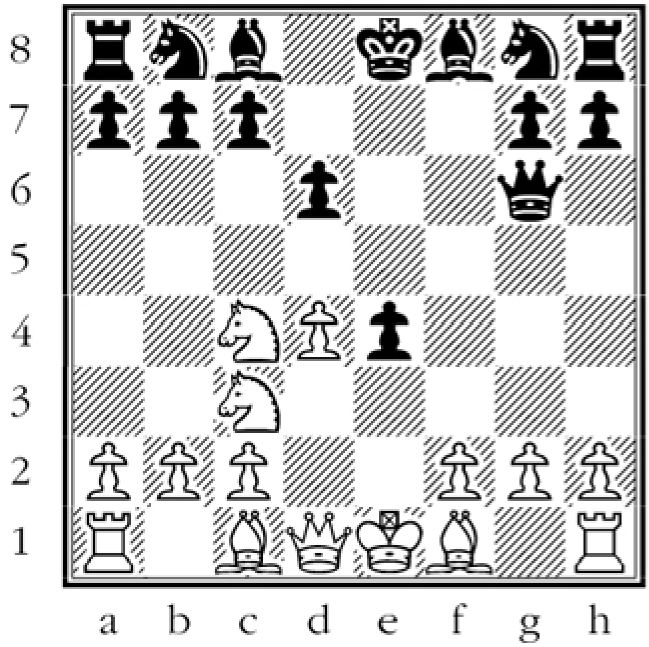
Black’s advance of the f-pawn is premature. It weakens Black’s king’s position and allows White to gain time with a formidable threat.

3.Nxe5

Threatening 4.Qh5+ and if 4…g6 5.Nxg6. Hence Black’s reply.

3…Qf6 4.d4 d6 5.Nc4 fxe4 6.Nc3 Qg6

The tricky 6…c6 does not work because of 7.Nxe4 Qe6 8.Qe2 d5 9.Ned6+ Kd7 10.Nf7!!. (D)



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Position after 6…Qg6

White is well ahead in development and Black’s forces are split. His queen will be sadly missed from the queenside.

7.Bf4 Nf6 8.Ne3 Be7

After 8…Be6 9.d5 followed by Qd4, Black’s game is disorganized and his e-pawn is weak.

9.Bc4 c6 10.d5!

White has definitely the better game because of his superior development. Black’s e-pawn lacks the natural support of …d5 and the prospects for development of his queenside forces remain bleak.

Philidor’s Defense

Black’s passive second move immediately puts him on the defensive with a cramped and passive game. White has the initiative and much more freedom no batter how Black proceeds.

(a) 3…exd4 Variation

Philidor’s Defense

White – Black

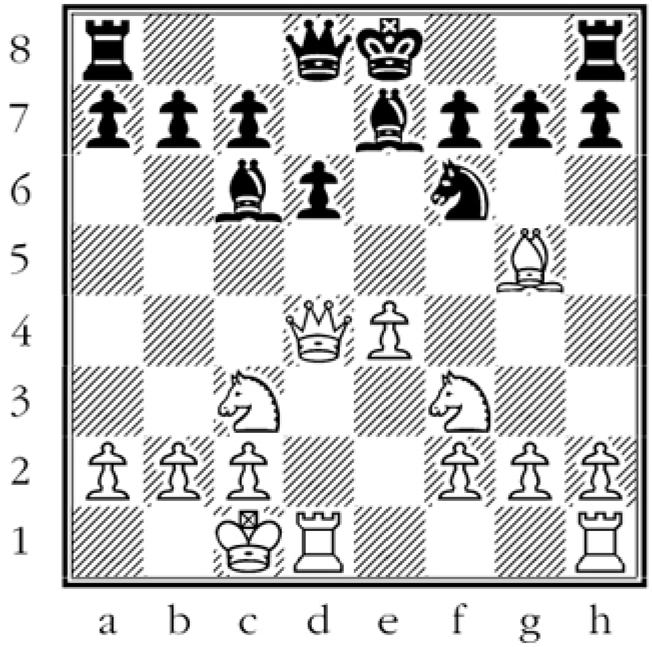
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6

The characteristic move of this defense. Note that it hems in Black's dark-square bishop.

3.d4 exd4

Black surrenders the center, giving White the opportunity to develop his queen aggressively.

4.Qxd4! Nc6 5.Bb5! Bd7 6.Bxc6 Bxc6 7.Nc3 Nf6 8.Bg5 Be7 9.0-0-0 (D)



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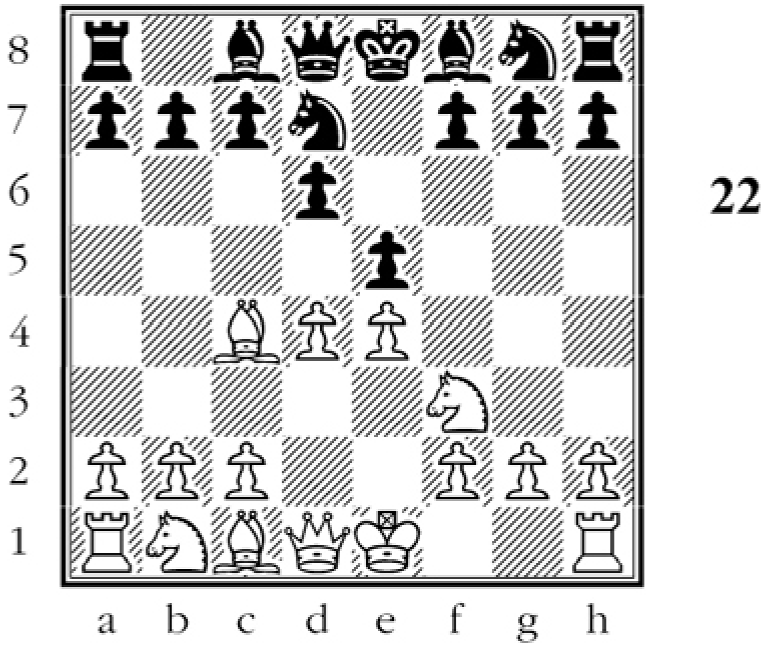
Position after 9.0-0-0

White has a splendid initiative with a marked lead in development and plenty of room for his pieces.

(b) Hanham Variation
Philidor's Defense
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 Nd7 4.Bc4!

By playing 3…Nd7 Black has announced his policy of not giving up the center as in the previous variation. However, his position is badly constricted. (D)



Position after 4.Bc4!

Black is in trouble. If now 4…Be7? 5.dxe5! Nxe5 6.Nxe5 dxe5 7.Qh5 – or 5…dxe5 6.Qd5. In either case White wins material.

4…c6 5.Nc3 Be7 6.0-0 Ngf6 7.a4!

Prevents Black from making some room for his pieces on the queenside with …b5 etc.

White has distinctly the better game because his pieces have far more mobility. A likely continuation is 7…Qc7 8.Qe2 0-0 9.Ba2 followed by Be3 and White maintains a noticeably freer position.

Petroff's Defense

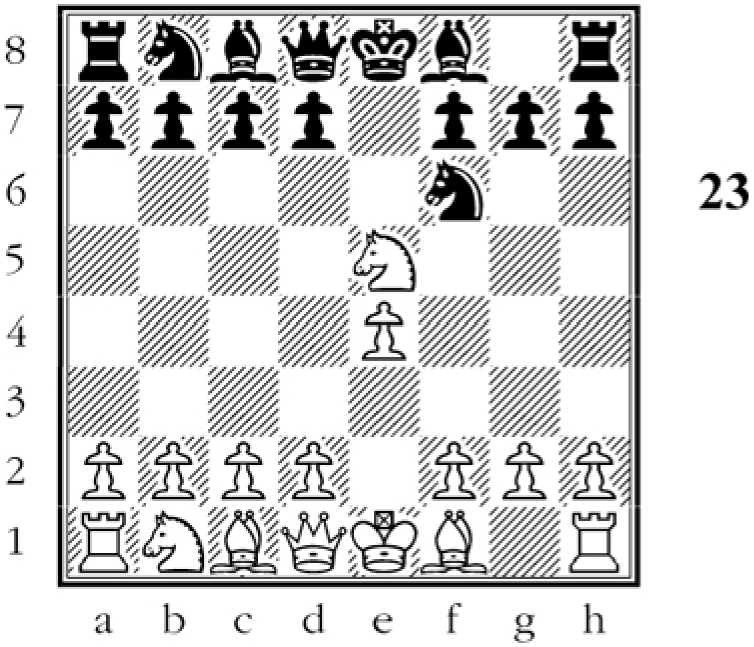
On the surface this is an aggressive defense, as Black counterattacks on the second move. Actually White has several simplifying drawish possibilities. Consequently Black should avoid the Petroff *if he is out to win.* On the other hand, if White strives for the initiative, Black has just enough resources to hold the position.

Petroff's Defense
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6

The key move. If now 3.d4 exd4! 4.e5 Ne4 5.Qxd4 d5 6.exd6 Nxd6 with even chances.

3.Nxe5 (D)



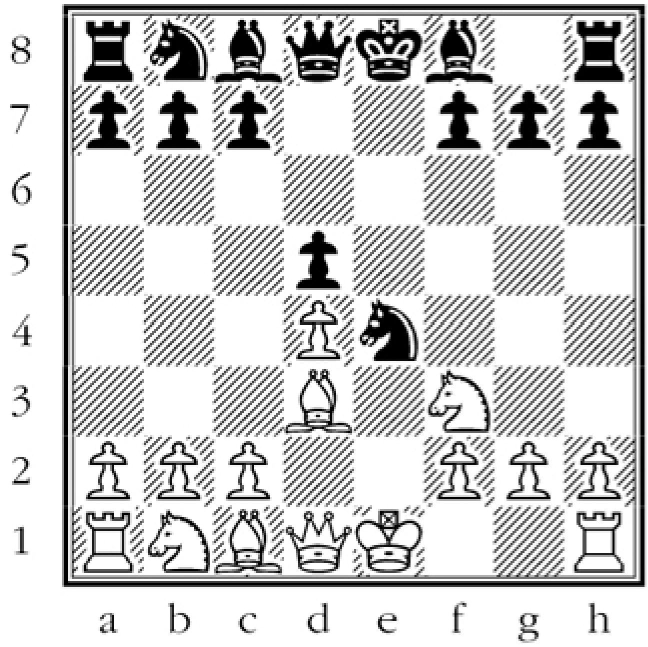
Position after 3.Nxe5

This position is not as harmless as it looks. If now 3…Nxe4?? 4.Qe2! and White forces the win of some material – for example 4…Nf6??? 5.Nc6+.

3…d6! 4.Nf3 Nxe4

Here White has a colorless line which spoils the Petroff for aggressive players: 5.Qe2 Qe7 6.d3 Nf6 7.Bg5 etc.

5.d4 d5 6.Bd3 (D)



Position after 6.Bd3

Momentarily it seems as if White may succeed in getting a slight initiative, say 6…Bd6 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4! c6 9.Nc3 etc.

6…Be7 7.0-0 Nc6 8.c4

Again White seems to be making headway, for example 8…Nf6 9.c5! and Black's game is cramped.

8…Nb4! 9.cxd5 Nxd3 10.Qxd3 Qxd5 11.Re1 Bf5

Even game. A plausible follow-up is 12.Nc3 Nxc3 13.Qxc3 c6 14.Re5 Qd7 15.d5! 0-0 16.dxc6 bxc6. In that case Black's queenside pawns have been weakened, but he has good bishops.

Scotch Game

With his third and fourth moves, White violates the principles of rapid development. At move 4 Black is able to develop with gain of time and is thus assured of equality.

(a) 4…Bc5 Variation

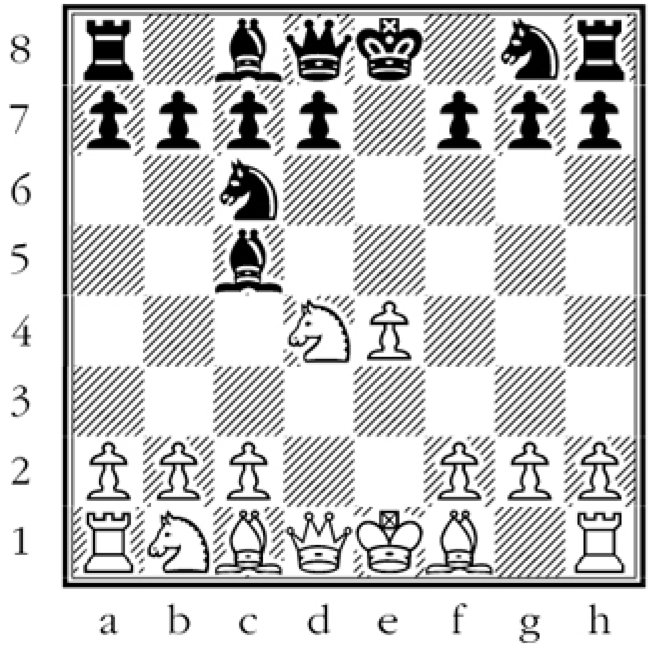
Scotch Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4

A possibility here is 4.Bc4. After 4…Nf6 White can lead into the Two Knights' Defense with 5.0-0 or 5.e5, or he can continue the gambit proper with 5.c3 dxc3 6.Nxc3. This gives him an active development as partial compensation for his pawn.

4…Bc5 (D)



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Position after 4…Bc5

Black develops with attack – pure gain of time. The following struggle for control of the center squares is very interesting and certainly offers Black no difficulty.

5.Be3 Qf6 6.c3 Nge7 7.Nc2 Bxe3 8.Nxe3 0-0 9.Be2 d6 10.0-0 Be6 11.Nd2 d5!

The classic equalizing move. The game is perfectly even.

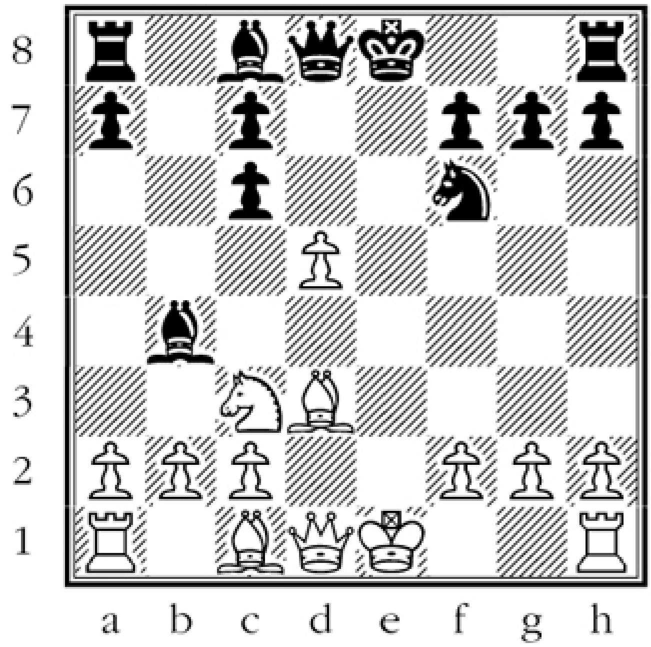
(b) 4…Nf6 Variation

Scotch Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Bb4 6.Nxc6 bxc6 7.Bd3 d5 8.exd5

After 8.e5 Black gets a good game with 8…Ng4 or 8…Ne4. (D)



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Position after 8.exd5

Black’s simplest equalizing method is 8…Qe7+ 9.Qe2 Nxd5 10.Qxe7+ Kxe7 etc.

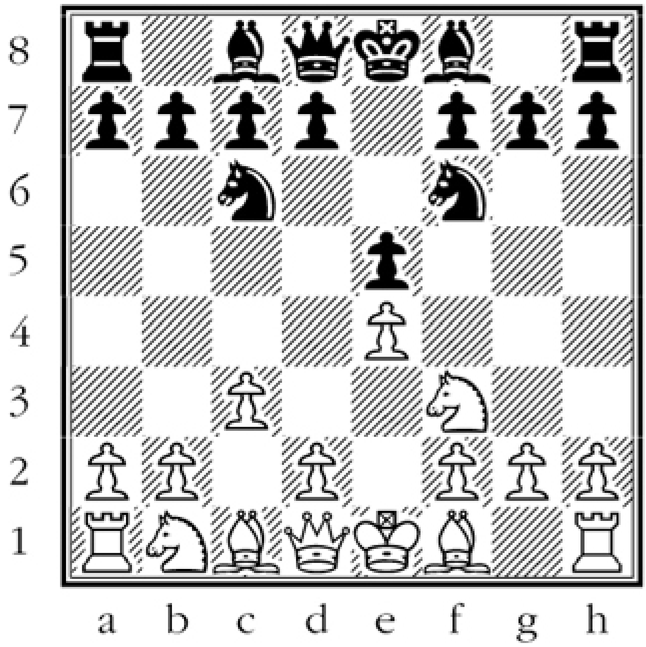
8…cxd5 9.0-0 0-0 10.Bg5 Be6 11.Qf3 Be7

Even game. White’s position is more aggressive, but Black has ample resources.

Ponziani Opening

Whereas in the Scotch Game White advances too rapidly in the center to achieve any lasting effect, in the Ponziani Opening he advances too slowly. So Black equalizes without any trouble.

Ponziani Opening
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.c3 Nf6! (D)



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Position after 3…Nf6!

White's third move holds up his development and takes away his queen knight's best square.

4.d4 d5!

Much better than 4…Nxe4? 5.d5 Nb8 6.Bd3! Nc5 7.Nxe5 when Black has an unpromising position.

5.Bb5!

White wisely takes the prudent course. If 5.exd5 Qxd5 6.Be2 e4 7.Nfd2 e3! 8.fxe3 Qxg2 Black has the initiative.

Meanwhile White hopes for some such continuation as 5…dxe4 6.Nxe5, which gives him fair prospects of initiative. In addition, even after 6…Bd7 White would permanently spoil Black's queenside pawn position with 7.Bxc6 etc.

5…exd4 6.Nxd4 Bd7 7.exd5 Nxd4 8.Bxd7+ Qxd7 9.Qxd4 Qxd5 10.Qe3+ Be7

Black has a slight lead in development, but the position may be considered even.

Hungarian Defense

Black sometimes adopts this defense to evade the Giuoco Piano or Evans Gambit. However, the result is a cramped game for him. Therefore this defense is not recommended for Black.

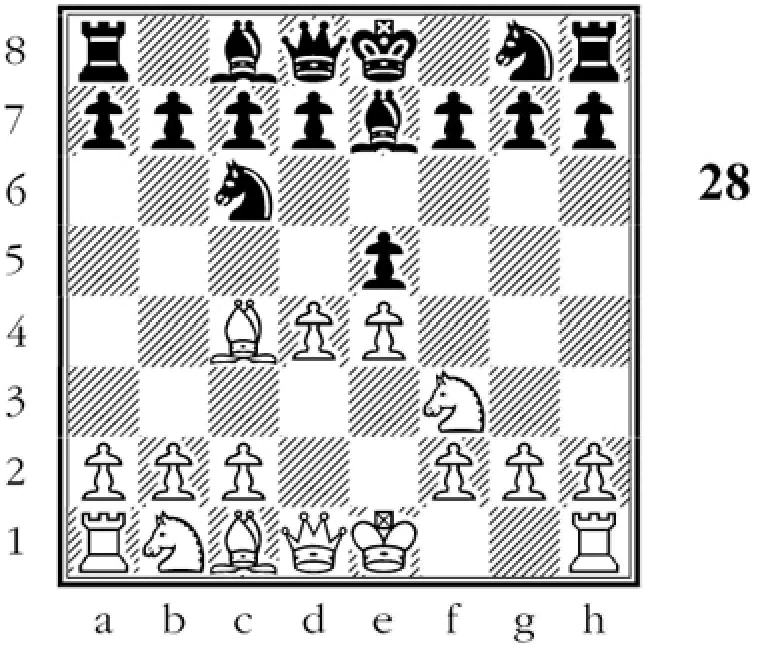
Hungarian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Be7

Black's last move is the characteristic move of this defense.

4.d4! (D)



Position after 4.d4!

If Black plays 4…exd4 the sequel might be 5.Nxd4 d6 6.0-0 Nf6 7.Nc3 0-0 8.h3 when Black has a cramped position reminiscent of Philidor's Defense (page 228).

4…d6 5.d5!

The key move of White's plan: Black is to be permanently tied up.

5…Nb8 6.Bd3!

White must prevent Black's only way of seeking freedom – by …f5.

6…Nf6 7.c4 0-0

On 7…Nbd7 8.Nc3 0-0 9.h3 Nc5 10.Bc2 a5 11.Be3 and Black's position is crowded just as badly as in the text line.

8.h3! c6 9.Nc3 Na6 10.Be3 Nc7 11.0-0 Nfe8 12.Qc2!

White has much the better game. Black's position is sadly constricted.

Giuoco Piano

This is the first opening in our survey which is based on strictly logical ideas. White strives for the initiative with his second move (2.Nf3), and continues with 3.Bc4. Thus he gives his light-square bishop an aggressive diagonal and attempts to restrain the liberating …d5. Then he proceeds to construct a strong pawn center.

All this sounds formidable, and it is. Black can easily go wrong if he does not know the safest lines.

(a) Møller Attack

Giuoco Piano

White – Black

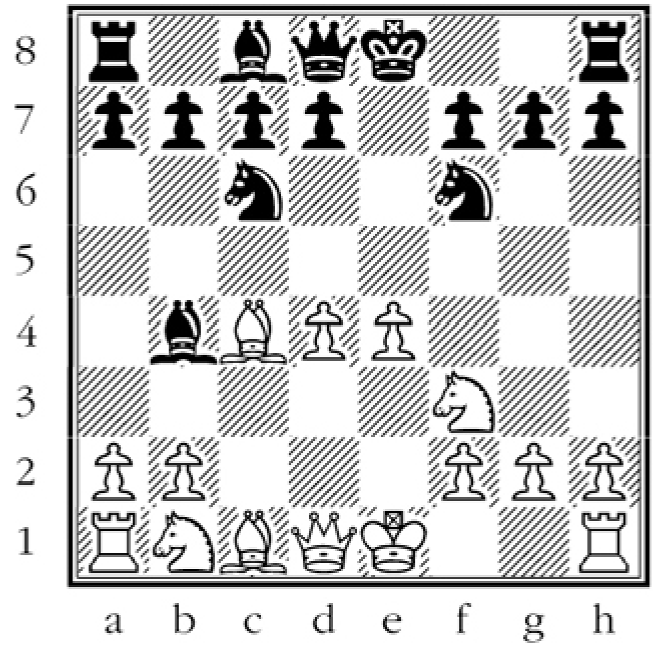
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6

The classic counterattacking move. Black intends to give up the center with his next move.

5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4

Note that although 6.e5 looks impressive, Black has a perfect answer in 6…d5!.

6…Bb4+ (D)



Position after 6…Bb4+

The simple and safe course is now 7.Bd2 Bxd2+ 8.Nbxd2 d5! 9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Qb3 Nce7 11.0-0 0-0 with equality.

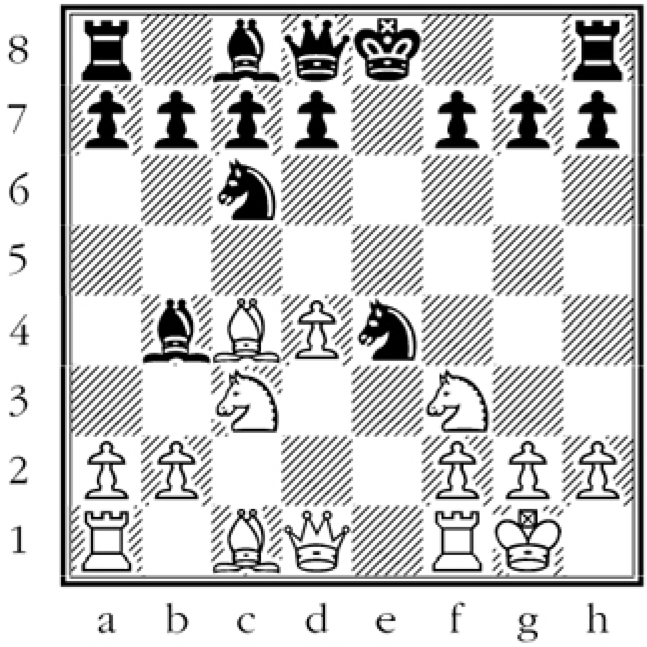
The alternative 6…Bb6? leaves Black with a miserable game after 7.e5 Ng8 8.d5 etc.

7.Nc3?! Nxe4!?

Another way is 7…d5! and if 8.exd5 Nxd5 9.0-0 Be6! 10.Bg5 Be7 11.Bxd5 Bxd5 12.Nxd5 Qxd5 13.Bxe7 Nxe7 14.Re1 f6! 15.Qe2 Qd7 16.Rac1 Kf7! and Black is safe after 17…Rhe8 and 18…Kg8.

Note that White's last move is a wild attempt to create dangerous complications at the cost of a pawn or even more material.

8.0-0 (D)



Position after 8.0-0

Black must proceed with great care.

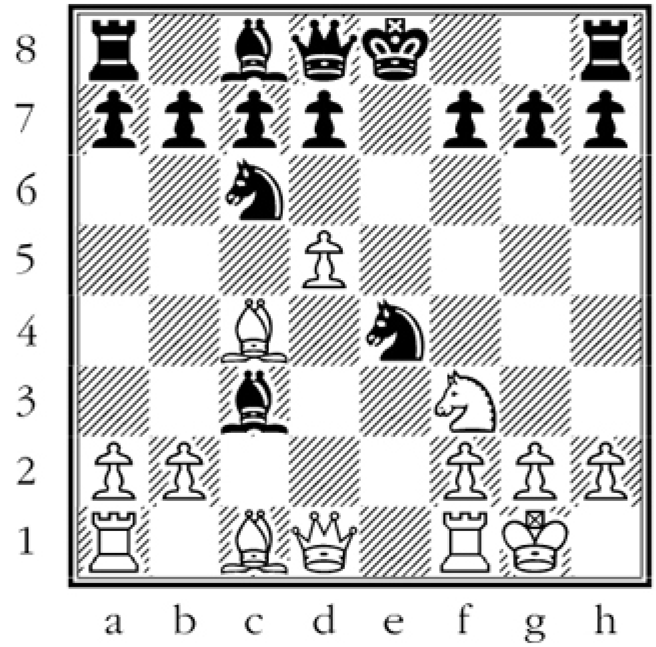
Now 8…Nxc3 can lead to a lot of trouble for Black after 9.bxc3 d5 10.cxb4 dxc4 11.Re1+ Ne7 (if 11…Be6? 12.d5 wins a piece) 12.Qe2 Be6 13.Bg5 Qd5 14.Bxe7 Kxe7 15.Qc2! f6 16.Ng5! fxg5 (if 16…Qxg5 17.Qe4 with a winning attack) 17.Re5 Qxd4 18.Rae1 and White wins back his piece with advantage.

Another dangerous line for Black is 9…Bxc3? 10.Ba3!! and wins. Thus, after 10…Bxa1?? 11.Re1+ Black can resign.

And if 10…d5 11.Bb5! Bxa1 12.Re1+ Be6 13.Qa4! and Black is lost.

Or take this possibility: 10…d6 11.Rc1 Ba5 12.Qa4 a6 13.Bd5 Bb6 14.Rxc6! Bd7 15.Re1+ Kf8 16.Rxd6!! and wins.

8…Bxc3! 9.d5 (D)



Position after 9.d5

This position is full of bewildering possibilities. Black's safest is 9…Ne5!.

9…Ne5! 10.bxc3 Nxc4 11.Qd4

A famous trap here is 11…Ncd6? 12.Qxg7 Qf6 13.Qxf6 Nxf6 14.Re1+. If now 14…Kd8?? 15.Bg5! wins.

If 14…Kf8?? 15.Bh6+ Kg8 16.Re5! and Black is lost, for example 16…Nde4 17.Nd2 Nxd2 18.Rg5# or 17…d6 18.Nxe4 dxe5 19.Nxf6#.

Finally, if 14…Nfe4 15.Nd2 f5 16.f3 with a winning game for White.

11…f5 12.Qxc4

Not 12.Qxg7? Qf6 and White has no compensation for the lost piece.

12…d6

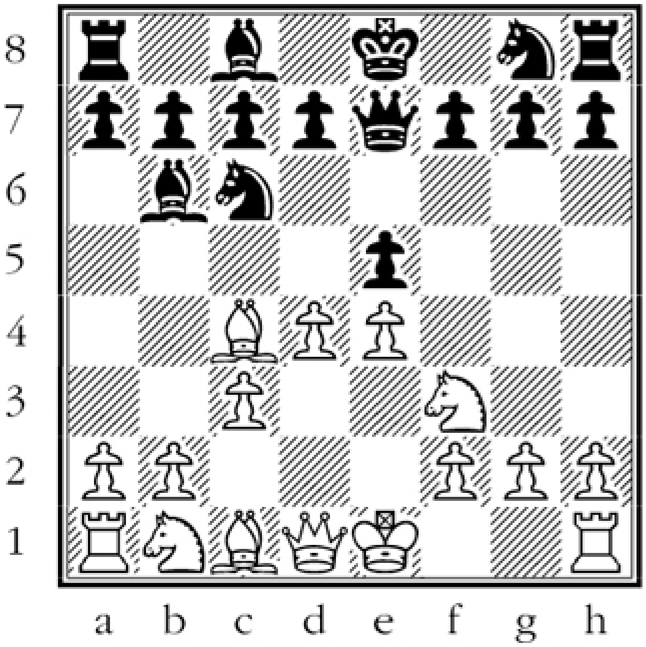
Black has the advantage: his position is safe and he is a pawn to the good.

(b) 4…Qe7 Variation

Giuoco Piano

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Qe7 5.d4 Bb6 (D)



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Position after 5…Bb6

Black avoids exchanging pawns in order to hold the center. The result is a very cramped game for him.

6.0-0 Nf6 7.Re1 d6 8.h3!

Preventing the pin …Bg4. Thus White strengthens his pawn center and deprives Black's light-square bishop of its best square.

8…0-0 9.Na3! Nd8 10.Bd3! c6 11.Nc4 Bc7

White has distinctly the better game because of his greater freedom. He can play 12.b3! threatening 13.Ba3 with annoying possibilities.

(c) 4.d3 Variation

Giuoco Piano

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.d3

This leads to a slow game which gives Black very little trouble.

4…Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Be3

After 6.Bg5 h6 (6…Na5 is also playable) 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.Nd5 Qd8 9.c3 a6! 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 Ba7 Black's game is slightly preferable because of his two bishops.

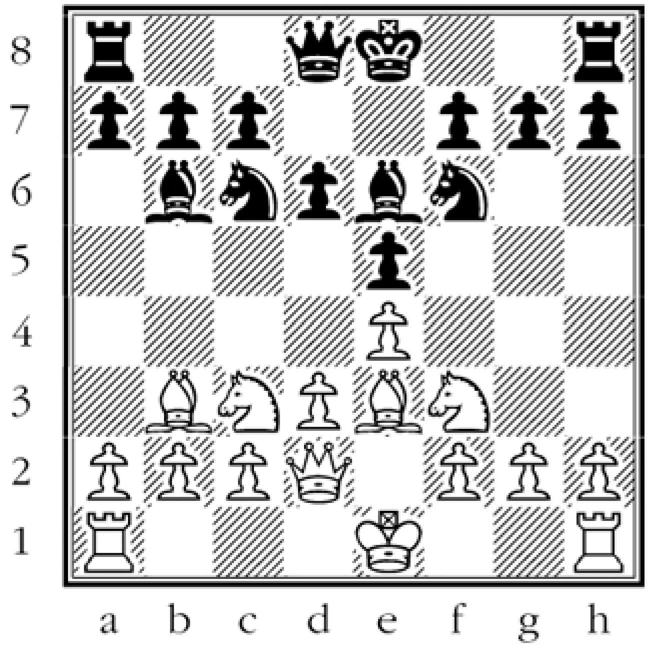
6…Bb6

Better than 6…Bxe3 7.fxe3, which gives White an open f-file.

7.Qd2 Be6 8.Bb3

White is confronted with the same problem that Black encountered at move 6. That is to say, White is unwilling to play 8.Bxe6, for that would open the f-file for Black. However, now that White has retreated Bb3, Black in turn has to meet the same problem. If Black now plays 8…Bxb3, White replies 9.axb3, acquiring an open a-file.

This reasoning about the desirability or undesirability of exchanging the bishops is an important feature of the variation. Obtaining an open file is often the imperceptible beginning of a strong initiative. (D)



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Position after 8.Bb3

This is a good variation for inexperienced players, as the position offers little scope for complications.

Even game; the symmetrical position of the bishops and pawns offers little to either side.

Evans Gambit

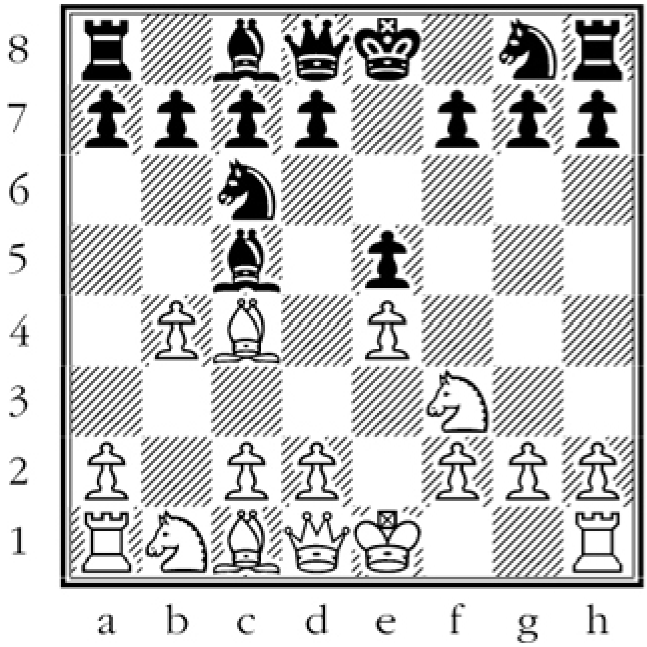
The Evans is a brilliant offshoot of the Giuoco Piano, wherein White sacrifices a pawn in order to obtain open lines and gain time to form a strong pawn center. The attack can become extremely vehement and calls for really resourceful play on the defender’s part.

(a) Evans Gambit Accepted

Evans Gambit

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 (D)



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Position after 4.b4

White offers a pawn sacrifice which may involve many pitfalls, prepared variations, and tricky analysis. Black does well to choose a simple defense.

4…Bxb4 5.c3 Be7!

The old defense 5…Bc5 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 Bb6 8.0-0 d6 leaves White with a strong lead in development after 9.Nc3.

6.d4 Na5!

Guarding against 7.Qb3.

7.Bd3

Or 7.Nxe5 Nxc4 8.Nxc4 d5 9.exd5 Qxd5 with a pleasant game for Black.

7…exd4 8.cxd4 d5 9.Nc3

If now 9.exd5 Nf6* 10.Qa4+ c6 and Black's game is very comfortable.

9…dxe4 10.Nxe4 Nf6 11.Nxf6+ Bxf6 12.Qa4+ Nc6

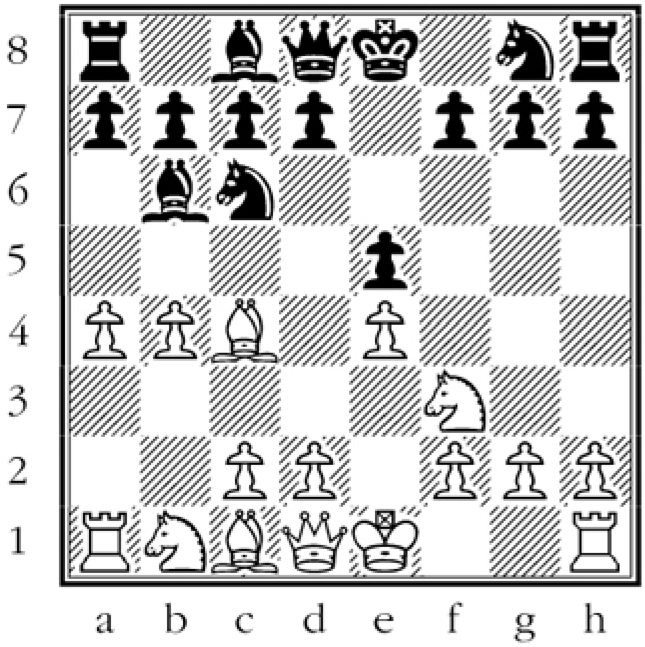
Black has an easy game after 13.Ba3 Be7 14.Bb5 0-0!, returning the gambit pawn. Note Black's emphasis on quick development – even at the cost of returning the gambit pawn.

(b) Evans Gambit Declined

Evans Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bb6! 5.a4 (D)



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Position after 5.a4

By declining the gambit Black gets a perfectly safe and satisfactory position. Thus he avoids all the complications of the gambit accepted.

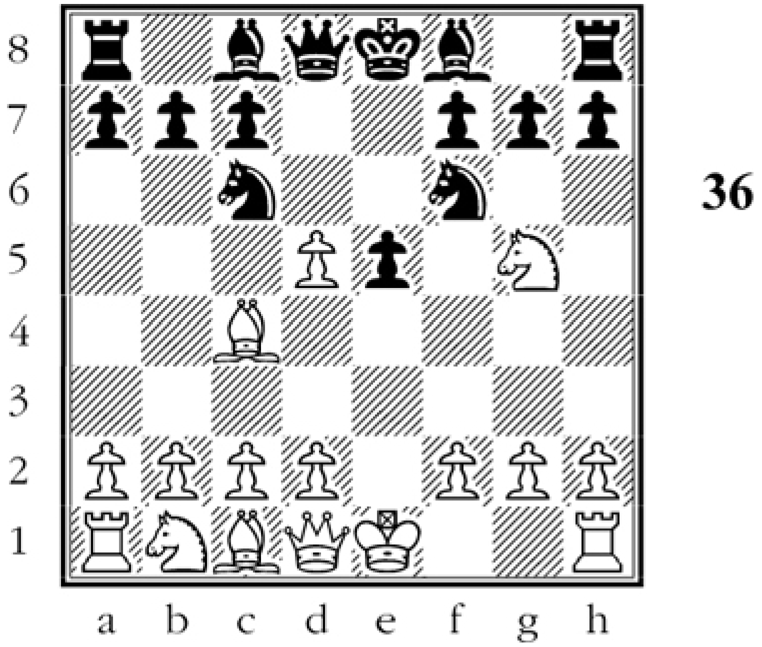
5…a6 6.Bb2 d6 7.b5 axb5 8.axb5 Rxa1 9.Bxa1 Nd4! 10.Nxd4 exd4 11.c3 Nf6 12.0-0 0-0

Even game, with this possibility: 13.d3 c6! 14.bxc6 bxc6 15.cxd4 d5! 16.exd5 Nxd5 and White's extra pawn is worthless.

Two Knights' Defense

This is a line of play selected by those who wish to evade the Giuoco Piano or Evans Gambit. This defense calls for enterprising play, as many variations necessitate a pawn sacrifice on Black's part.

(a) 4.Ng5 Variation
Two Knights' Defense
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 (D)



Position after 5.exd5

Black's best is 5…Nxd5!, for if 6.Nxf7?! (the Fried Liver Attack) 6…Kxf7 7.Qf3+ Ke6 8.Nc3 Ncb4! 9.Qe4 c6 10.d4 Kd7! and Black is safe.

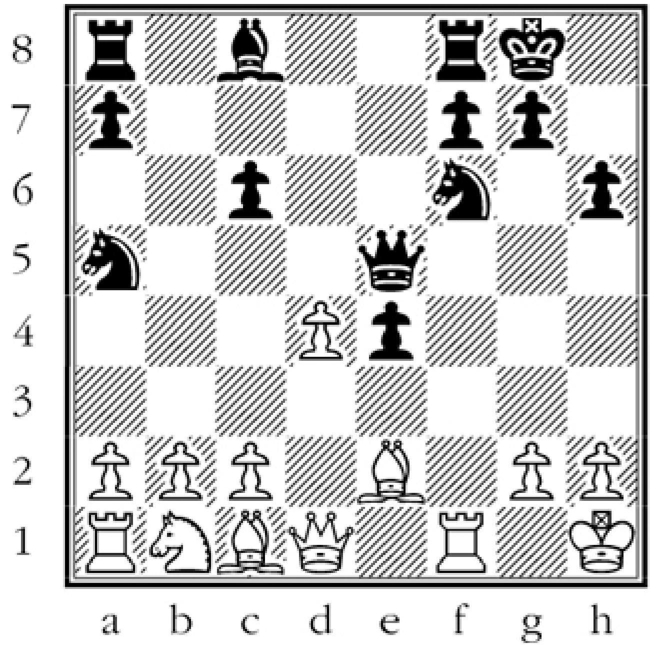
5…Na5 6.Bb5+

After 6.d3 h6 7.Nf3 e4 Black has the initiative in return for his sacrificed pawn; for example 8.Qe2 Nxc4 9.dxc4 Bc5 10.Nfd2 0-0 11.Nb3 Bg4! etc.

6…c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Be2

On 8.Qf3 Black can try the venturesome 8…cxb5! 9.Qxa8 Qd7 with a notable lead in development against White's disorganized forces.

8…h6 9.Nf3 e4 10.Ne5 Bd6 11.f4! 0-0 12.0-0 Bxe5 13.fxe5 Qd4+ 14.Kh1 Qxe5 15.d4! (D)



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Position after 15.d4!

White has benefited considerably by returning the pawn at move 12.

White has the better game whether Black retreats his queen or captures the d-pawn in passing. White's positional advantages are well defined: he has an open f-file; two aggressive bishops; and the queenside majority of pawns. Black's queenside pawns are split and his queen knight is sadly out of play.

(b) 4.d4 Variation

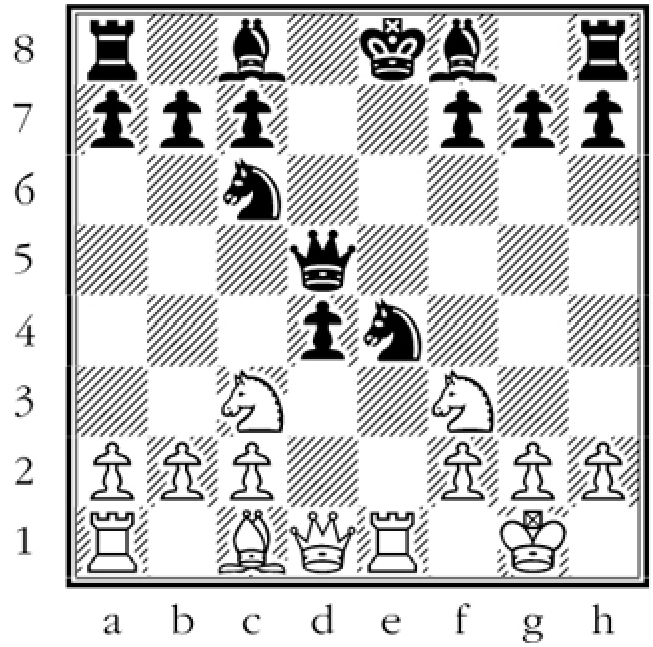
Two Knights' Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d4 exd4 5.0-0 Nxe4

The alternative 5…Bc5 6.e5 d5 may lead to the Max Lange Attack.

6.Re1 d5 7.Bxd5 Qxd5 8.Nc3 (D)



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Position after 8.Nc3

White makes use of a piquant double pin to win back the sacrificed material.

8…Qh5 9.Nxe4 Be6 10.Bg5 Bb4 11.Nxd4

White has regained his pawn with an even game. The continuation might be 11…Qxd1 12.Rexd1 Nxd4 13.Rxd4 Be7.

Max Lange Attack

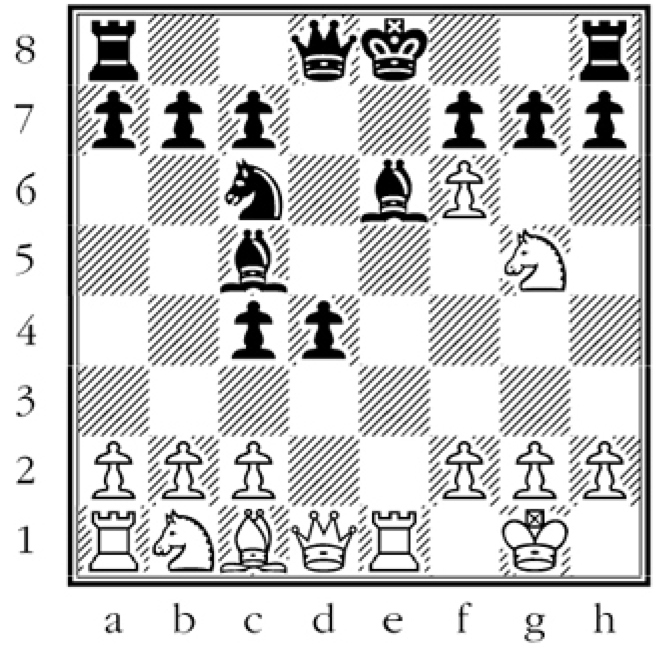
Max Lange Attack

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d4 exd4 5.0-0 Bc5 6.e5 d5! 7.exf6 dxc4 8.Re1+

White should play for equality with 8.fxg7 Rg8 9.Bg5 etc.

8…Be6 9.Ng5 (D)



Position after 9.Ng5

White’s threat is 10.Nxe6 fxe6 11.Qh5+ winning the bishop.

9…Qd5 10.Nc3! Qf5 11.Nce4 0-0-0!

If now 11…Bf8 12.Nxf7! Kxf7 13.Ng5+ and White regains the piece with a winning attack.

12.Nxe6 fxe6 13.g4 Qe5 14.fxg7 Rhg8

In this wide open position Black has the initiative, for example 15.Bh6 Bb4! 16.Re2 d3! etc.

Four Knights’ Game (including Three Knights’ Game)

This solid line of play is generally good for a draw, but unpromising if White want to play for a win. Black has many equalizing methods, and numerous possibilities of simplifying exchanges.

(a) Double Ruy Lopez with 6…Bxc3

Four Knights’ Game

White – Black

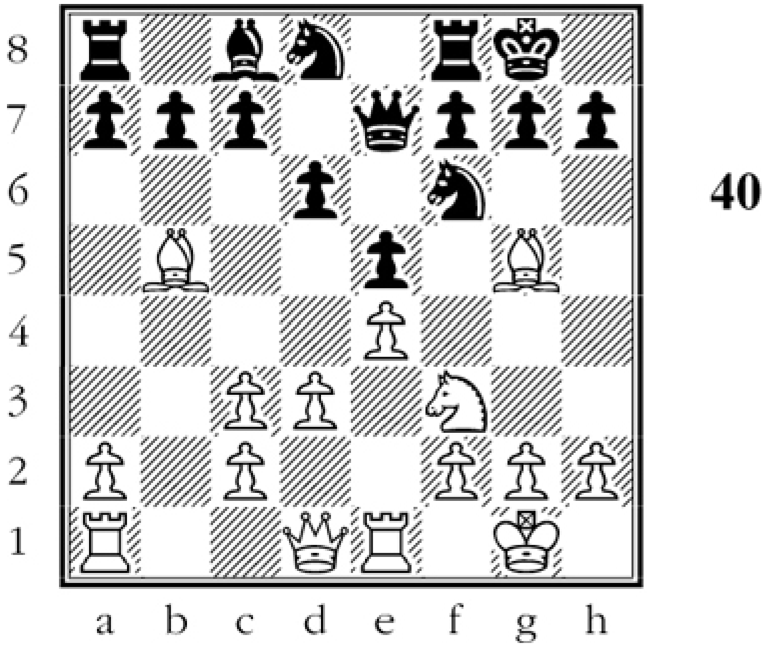
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bb4 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3

A lifeless, drawish alternative is 6.Bxc6 bxc6 7.Nxe5 Re8 8.Nd3 Bxc3 9.dxc3 Nxe4 etc.

6…Bxc3 7.bxc3 d6 8.Bg5 Qe7

After 8…Ne7? 9.Bxf6 gxf6 10.Nh4 c6 11.Bc4 d5 12.Bb3 Ng6 13.Nxg6 hxg6 14.f4! White has a decided initiative.

9.Re1 Nd8 (D)



Position after 9…Nd8

Black rearranges his pieces to get more maneuvering freedom.

10.d4 Ne6 11.Bc1 c5!

Black does not fear 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.Nxe5?? for then 13…Nc7! wins a piece.

12.g3 Qc7

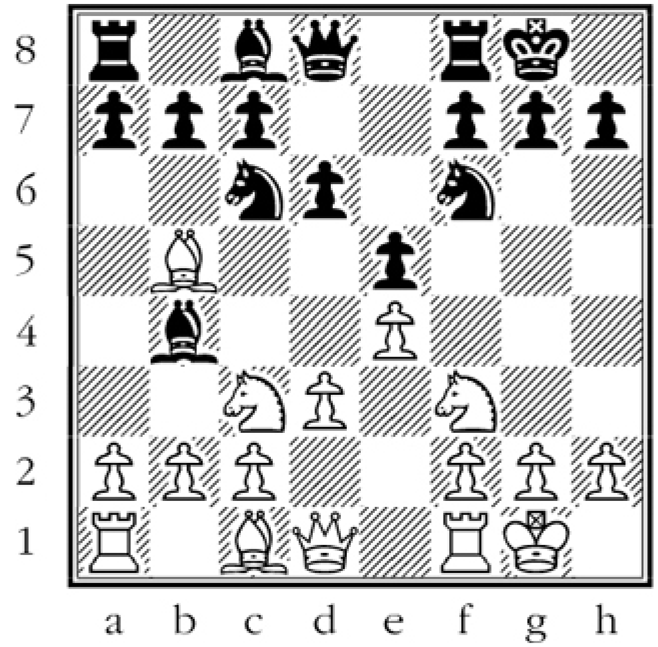
Black has a slight advantage because of his superior pawn position. A plausible possibility is 13.Qe2 a6 14.Bd3 b5 15.d5 c4! 16.dxe6 Bxe6! and Black regains the piece favorably.

(b) Double Ruy Lopez with 6…d6

Four Knights' Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bb4 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 d6 (D)



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Position after 6…d6

Black intends to hold on to the two bishops. If now 7.Ne2 Black replies 7…Ne7 with a symmetrical, drawish position.

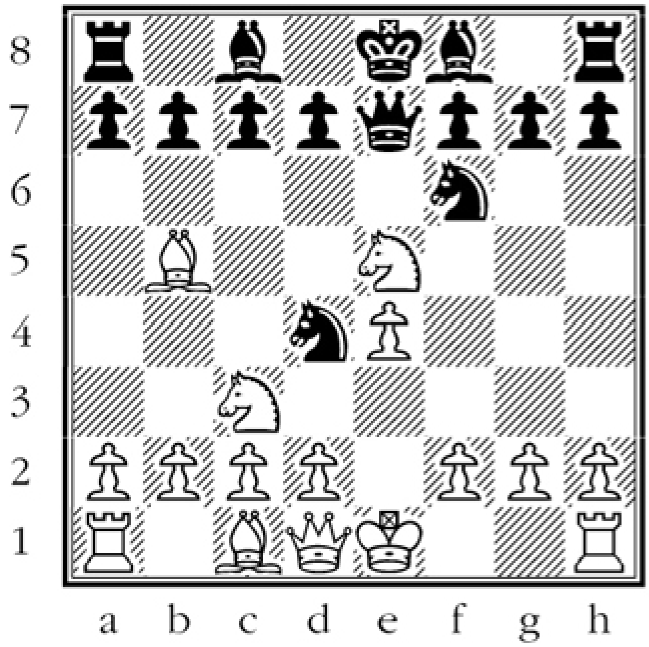
7.Bg5 Ne7

And not 7…Bg4 because of 8.Nd5 intensifying the pin on Black's king knight.

8.Bxf6 gxf6 9.Nh4 Ng6 10.Nxg6 hxg6 11.f4 Bc5+ 12.Kh1 Kg7 13.f5

After 13…c6 14.Bc4 d5! Black's bishop pair and compact pawn center promise well for him despite the somewhat barricaded character of the position.

(c) Rubinstein Variation
Four Knights' Game
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Nd4 5.Nxe5 Qe7 (D)



Position after 5…Qe7

Black has violated the rules of good development, but how is he to be punished? If 6.Nf3 Nxb5 7.Nxb5 Qxe4+ 8.Qe2 Qxe2+ 9.Kxe2 Nd5 10.c4 a6! and White has nothing.

6.f4! Nxb5 7.Nxb5 d6 8.Nf3 Qxe4+ 9.Kf2 Ng4+ 10.Kg1! Kd8 11.d3 Qc6

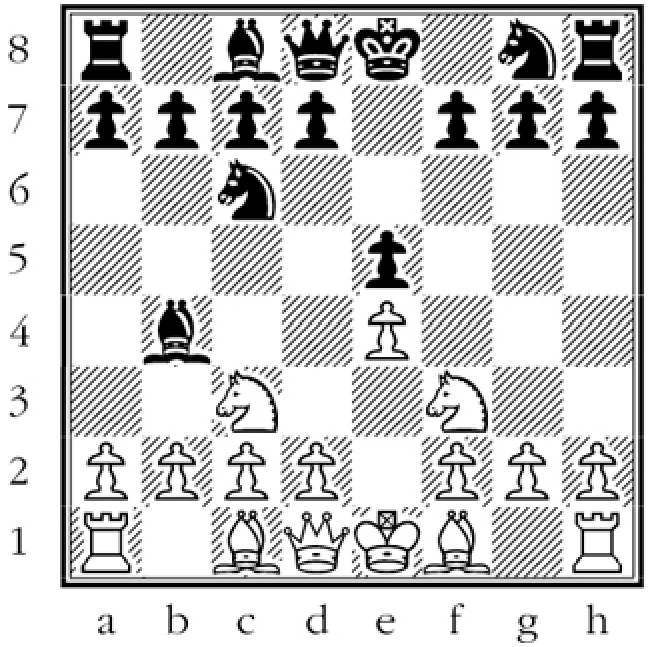
After 12.Nbd4 Qb6 13.h3 Nf6 14.Kh2 White has the better game. Black's king is insecure, his development disorganized.

(d) Three Knights' Game

Three Knights' Game

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Bb4 (D)



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Position after 3…Bb4

Black’s last move is the key to this opening. If instead 3…Nf6 we have the Four Knights’ Game.

4.Nd5 Nf6 5.Nxb4 Nxb4 6.Nxe5

If now 6.d4 d5! – or 6.Bc4 d5! 7.exd5 e4! with equality in either event.
6…Qe7 7.d4 Nxe4 8.c3 Nc6 9.Nxc6 dxc6 10.Be2 0-0 11.0-0 Be6
Even game. Neither side can accomplish much in this colorless position.

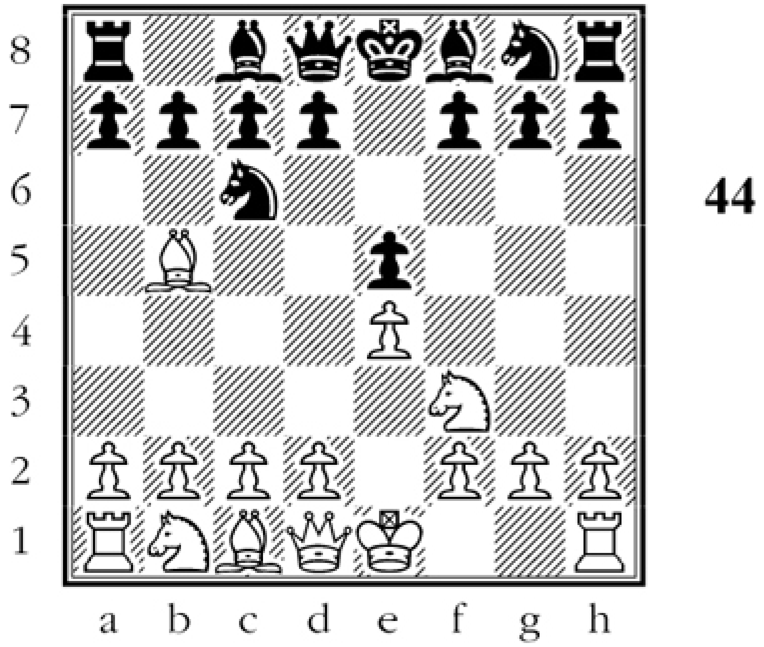
Ruy Lopez

In the whole realm of the e-pawn openings, this is White’s most serious attempt to seize the initiative. There are many lines of play in which White maintains a lasting pressure on Black’s position. Undoubtedly Black’s best defense is some form of the “Strongpoint” Variation, for this gives him his best chance of freedom.

(a) Tchigorin Variation
Ruy Lopez
White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5

This move exercises unmistakable pressure on Black’s game. Sooner or later White will be threatening to win a pawn by Bxc6 followed by Nxe5. (D)



Position after 3.Bb5

Black can play 3…a6 for if 4.Bxc6 dxc6 5.Nxe5, Black recovers his pawn with 5…Qg5 or 5…Qd4.

3…a6

This (known as the Morphy Defense) is Black’s best. By driving off White’s bishop with an eventual …b5, Black rids himself of White’s potential threat to win the e-pawn and gives his forces more playing room.

A possibility here for White is the Exchange Variation, which does not have much sting: 4.Bxc6 dxc6. This may continue 5.d4 exd4 6.Qxd4 Qxd4 7.Nxd4 Bd7 8.Be3 0-0-0 9.Nd2 Ne7 10.0-0-0 Re8 11.Rhe1 Ng6. Black’s bishops give him an excellent game.

4.Ba4 Nf6

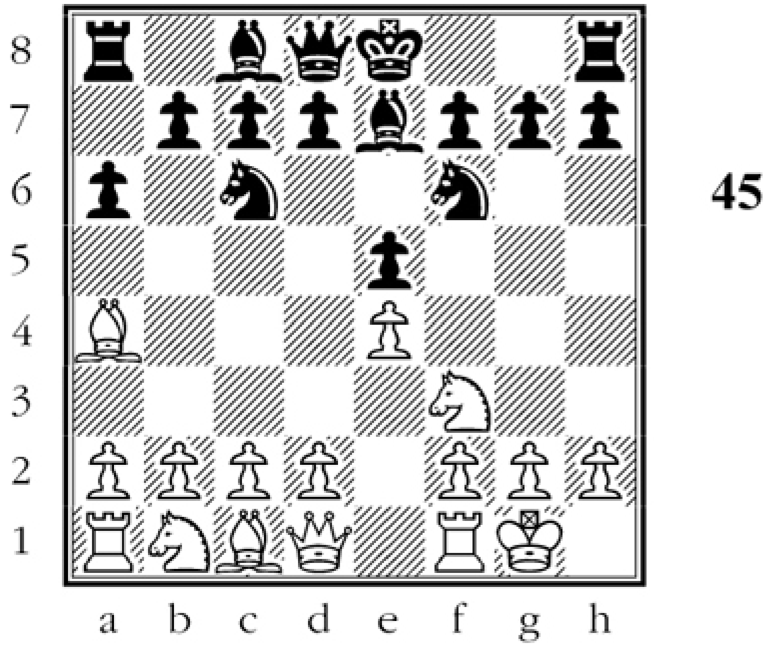
A good developing move which gains time by attacking White’s e-pawn.

5.0-0

Momentarily White can leave his e-pawn in the lurch, as he has threats on Black’s e-pawn himself.

5…Be7

Black can also play 5…Nxe4, as in Variation (c). (D)



Position after 5…Be7

White can now choose between defending his e-pawn and advancing in the center by d2-d4.

If White advances 6.d4, Black’s best reply is 6…exd4. In that event, White should not pause for 7.Re1, as he may fall into the Noah’s Ark trap: 7…b5 8.Bb3 d6 9.Nxd4?? Nxd4 10.Qxd4 c5 followed by 11…c4 winning White’s bishop!

In reply to 6…exd4 White’s best course is 7.e5. Then, after 7…Ne4 8.Nxd4 Nxd4 (not 8…Nxe5?? 9.Re1) 9.Qxd4 Nc5 the position is fairly level: White gets a lead in development, while Black has the two bishops.

Coming back to the position of Diagram 45, White can also stop to defend his e-pawn with 6.Qe2. Then if 6…0-0? there follows 7.Bxc6 dxc6 8.Nxe5 Qd4 9.Nf3 Qxe4 10.Qxe4 Nxe4 11.Re1 and White wins a piece.

Consequently, after 6.Qe2 Black plays 6…d6 although after 7.c3 0-0 8.d4 his game is somewhat constricted.

6.Re1

This is the usual move. Now that White has protected his own e-pawn, he threatens to win a pawn by 7.Bxc6 and 8.Nxe5.

6…b5

Driving off the bishop in order to safeguard his e-pawn.

7.Bb3 d6

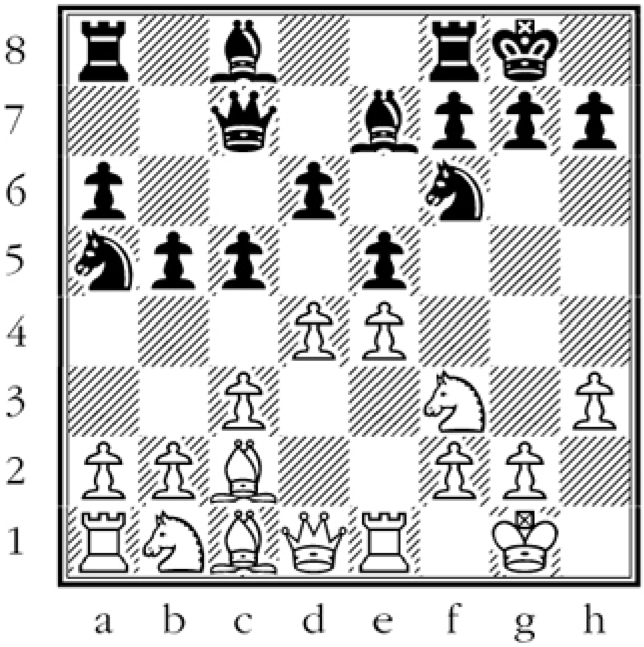
The safe and sane course, which avoids the premature counterattack 7…0-0 8.c3 d5?!. In that event there may follow 9.exd5 Nxd5 10.Nxe5 Nxe5 11.Rxe5 c6 12.d4! Bd6 13.Re1 Qh4 14.g3 Qh3 15.Re4!.

Although Black still has some attacking prospects, White has a satisfactory defense. His extra pawn should tell in his favor.

8.c3 0-0 9.h3!

More precise than the immediate 9.d4, which would allow the pin 9…Bg4. By advancing his h-pawn, White deprives Black’s light-square bishop of his best square.

9…Na5! 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7 (D)



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(Position after 11…Qc7)

Black has established a “strong point” at e5. By advancing his queenside pawns (beginning with 3…a6) he has established ample maneuvering space for his forces.

12.Nbd2 Nc6

A plausible alternative is 12…cxd4 13.cxd4 Nc6 14.d5 Nb4 15.Bb1 a5 16.a3 Na6. Black’s queen knight will come to c5, but White’s game is slightly freer.

13.d5 Nd8 14.a4! Rb8

But not 14…b4, which allows White to post his queen knight magnificently at c4.

15.c4! b4 16.Nf1 Ne8 17.g4 g6 18.Bh6 Ng7

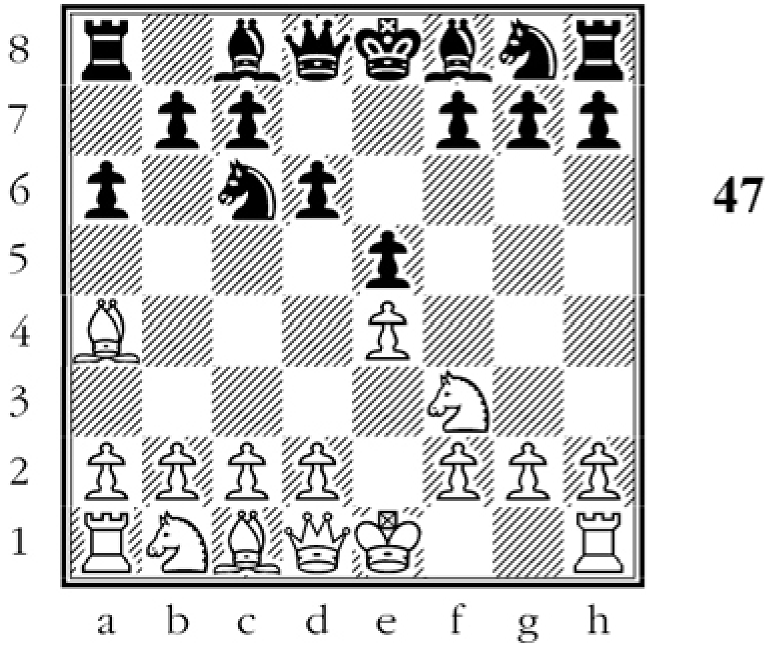
The position is approximately even. White has more maneuvering space, but Black’s game is very compact and hard to get at.

(b) Steinitz Defense Deferred

Ruy Lopez

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 (D)



Position after 4…d6

Black has delayed playing out his king knight as he has in mind variations in which this piece may play to e7 or h6; he may also want to advance his f-pawn.

If now 5.Bxc6+ bxc6 6.d4 Black holds the center with 6…f6! and after 7.Be3 Ne7 8.Nc3 Ng6 9.Qd2 Be7 his position is satisfactory.

Another possibility is 5.d4 b5 6.Bb3 Nxd4 7.Nxd4 exd4. Now 8.Bd5 is satisfactory for White, whereas 8.Qxd4?? c5 9.Qd5 Be6 10.Qc6+ Bd7 11.Qd5 c4 gives us another version of the Noah's Ark Trap.

5.c3 Bd7

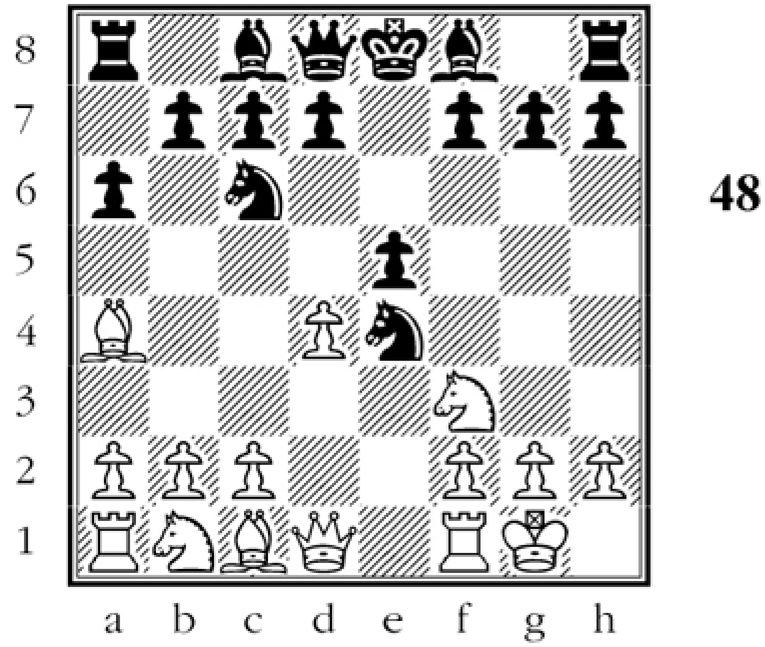
Here 5…f5 is premature: 6.exf5 Bxf5 7.d4! e4 8.Ng5 d5 9.f3! forcing line opening which is distinctly in White's favor.

6.d4 g6 7.Bg5 f6 8.Be3 Nh6! 9.0-0 Bg7 10.h3 Nf7 11.Nbd2 0-0 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.Bc5 Re8

The position is approximately even. White's apparent pressure is neutralized by Black's solid position.

(c) Open Defense
Ruy Lopez

White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Nxe4 6.d4! (D)

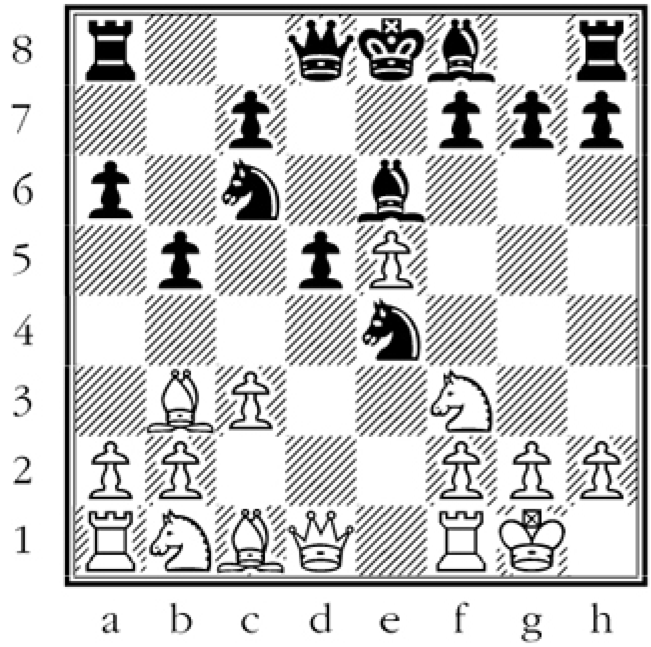


Position after 6.d4!

Winning a second pawn leads to trouble for Black, for example 6…exd4 7.Re1 d5 8.Bg5! Qd6 9.c4! dxc3 10.Nxc3 Be6 11.Nxe4 dxe4 12.Nd4 b5 13.Rxe4! bxa4 14.Qxa4 Qd5 15.Re5!! and wins.

6…b5 7.Bb3 d5 8.dxe5 Be6 9.c3

An interesting possibility is 9.Qe2, for example 9…Nc5 10.Rd1 Nxb3 11.axb3 Qc8 12.c4! dxc4 13.bxc4 Bxc4 14.Qe4 and White has a winning attack. (D)



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Position after 9.c3

Here 9…Bc5 gives Black an aggressive development but leaves him with a vulnerable pawn position – for example 10.Qd3 0-0 11.Be3 Bxe3 12.Qxe3 Ne7 13.Bc2 f5 14.exf6 Rxf6 15.Nd4!.

9…Be7 10.a4!

Now White gets a strong initiative.

10…b4 11.Nd4! Nxe5 12.f4 Bg4 13.Qc2 c5

Not 13…Ng6 14.cxb4 Bxb4? 15.Nc6.

14.fxe5 cxd4 15.cxd4 0-0

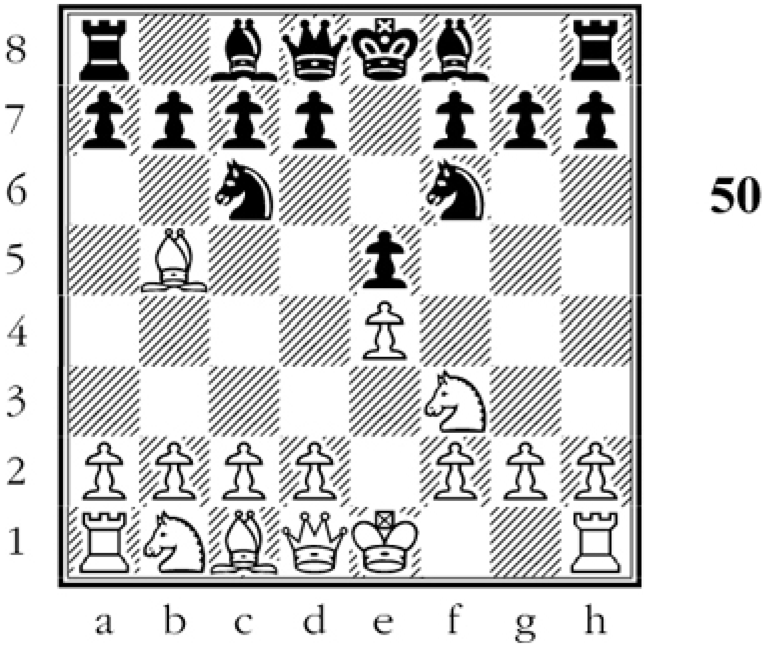
White has a clear advantage because of his greater mobility, attacking chances, and prospects of creating weaknesses in Black's kingside.

(d) Berlin Defense

Ruy Lopez

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 (D)



Position after 3…Nf6

The drawback of this once-popular defense is that it leads to a weak pawn position for Black.

4.0-0 Nxe4 5.d4 Be7

Note that 5…exd4?? will not do because of 6.Re1.

6.Qe2 Nd6 7.Bxc6 bxc6 8.dxe5 Nb7 9.Nc3 0-0 10.Nd4 Bc5 11.Rd1 Bxd4 12.Rxd4 d5 13.exd6 cxd6

The position is decidedly in White's favor. Black's game is very difficult because of his weak pawns and the bad position of his knight.

(e) Steinitz Defense

Ruy Lopez

White – Black

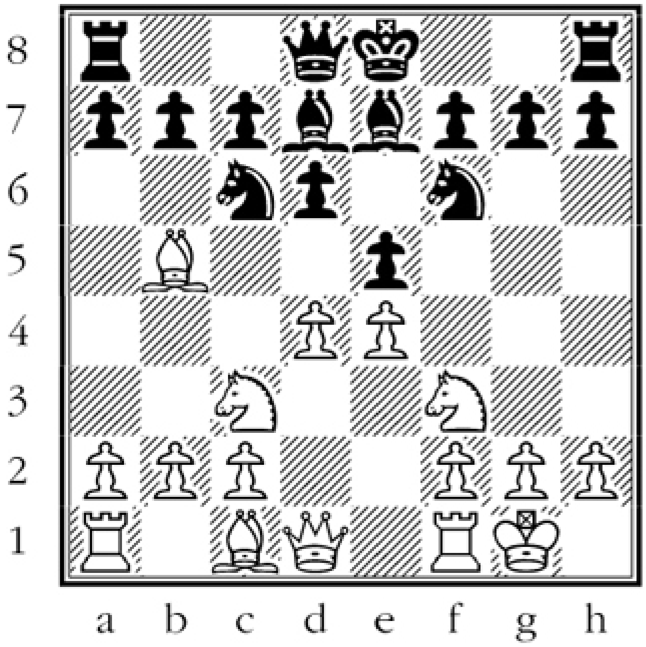
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 d6

This defense gives Black a cramped game.

4.d4! Bd7 5.Nc3 Nf6

If instead 5…exd4 6.Nxd4 Nf6 7.Bxc6! bxc6 8.Qf3! and White has the better of it, for example 8…Be7 9.e5! dxe5 10.Nxc6 etc.

6.0-0 Be7 (D)

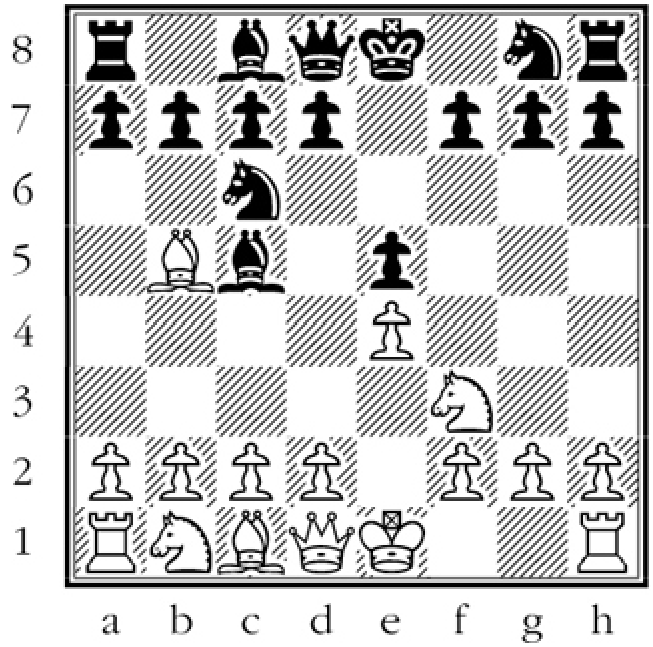


Position after 6…Be7

A likely continuation is 7.Bg5! exd4 8.Nxd4 0-0 9.Bxc6 bxc6 10.Qd3 Ng4 11.Bxe7 Qxe7 12.f4! f5 13.Rae1!. White has the better game. His aggressive development gives him greater freedom of action.

(f) Classical Defense

Ruy Lopez
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Bc5 (D)



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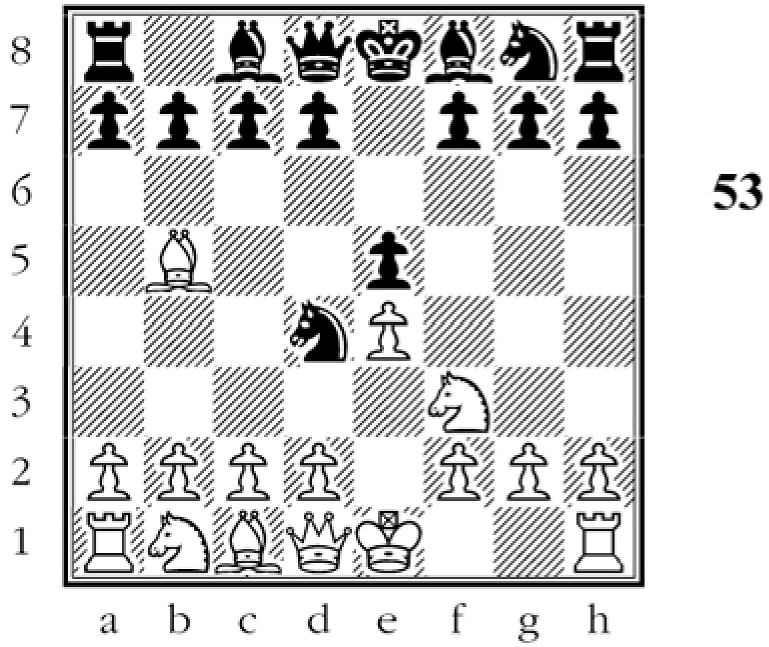
Position after 3…Bc5

The drawback of this defense is that Black’s dark-square bishop becomes a target for attack.

4.0-0 Nge7 5.c3 Bb6 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.exd5 Nxd5 9.Re1+ Be6 10.Bxc6+! bxc6 11.Qa4 Qd6 12.Bg5 0-0 13.Nc3

Thanks to Black’s shattered pawn position, White has a strategically won game.

(g) Bird’s Defense
Ruy Lopez
White – Black
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nd4 (D)



Position after 3…Nd4

This defense lacks punch. The offered exchange wastes time and allows White to get a clear initiative on the kingside.

4.Nxd4 exd4 5.0-0 g6 6.d3 Bg7 7.c3! Ne7 8.cxd4 Bxd4 9.Nc3 c6 10.Ba4 d6 11.Be3! Bg7 12.Qf3 0-0 13.Bb3 Kh8 14.Qg3

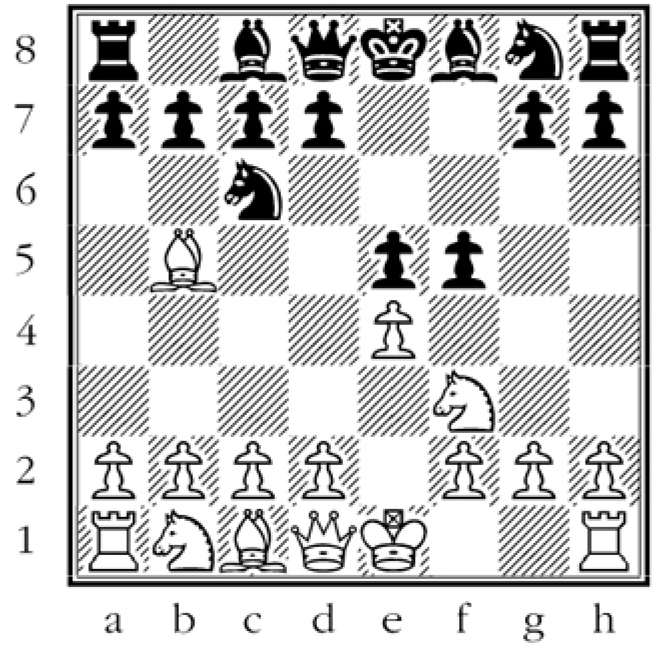
White is clearly forcing the pace, while Black has a difficult defensive game.

(h) Schliemann's Defense

Ruy Lopez

White – Black

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 f5 (D)



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Position after 3…f5

Black's counterattack is risky and invites a brisk reaction by White.

4.Nc3! fxe4 5.Nxe4 d5 6.Nxe5! dxe4 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.Bxc6+ Bd7 9.Qh5+ Ke7 10.Qe5+ Be6 11.Bxa8 Qxa8

White is ahead in material and Black's king is exposed to attack.

French Defense

From this point on, we no longer consider openings in which Black answers 1.e4 with 1.e5. Instead, he tries to fight for control of the center in a different way.

In this opening, for example, he answers 1.e4 with 1…e6, for then after 2.d4 he continues 2…d5. This is a defense with many solid defensive virtues, with the notable drawback that in many lines Black's light-square bishop has little scope.

This explains why the simplifying course 3.exd5 exd5 is rarely seen in modern play. The pawn position is symmetrical and drawish, and Black's light-square bishop has been liberated. Most variations in which White gets the initiative involve the move e4-e5. This keeps Black's light-square bishop tied up and also offers prospects of kingside action.

(a) McCutcheon Variation

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4

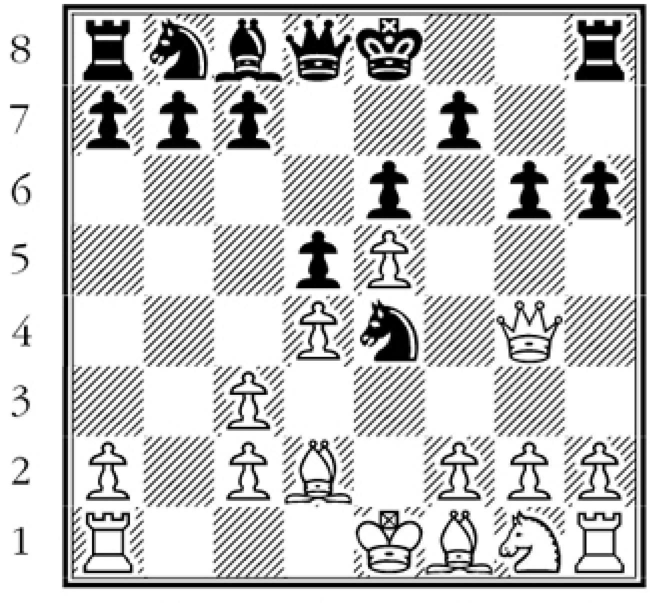
Black fights vigorously for control of the center. If now 5.exd5 Qxd5 6.Bxf6 Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 gxf6 8.Nf3 Nd7 9.g3 b6 10.Bg2 and Black can play 10…Ba6!, for if 11.Nh4 Qa5! 12.Bxa8 Qxc3+ and wins.

5.e5 h6

Forced. If now 6.exf6 hxg5 7.fxg7 Rg8 regaining the pawn with equality.

6.Bd2 Bxc3 7.bxc3 Ne4 8.Qg4 g6 (D)

Now White tries a speculative sacrifice to preserve his valuable dark-square bishop, for if 9.Bd3 Nxd2 10.Kxd2 c5 with a good game for Black.



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Position after 8…g6

9.Bc1!? Nxc3 10.Bd3 c5 11.dxc5 Qc7 12.Be3 Nd7

With 13.Qd4! White maintains the initiative, and his two powerful bishops assure him substantial attacking chances.

(b) Classical Main Line

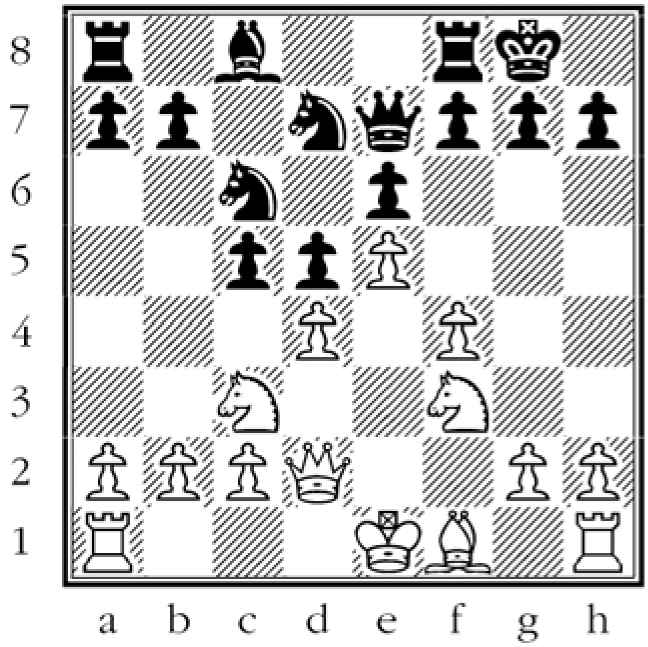
French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7

Another way of fighting for the center. White can hit back with 5.Bxf6 Bxf6 6.e5, but after 6…Be7 7.Qg4 0-0 8.0-0-0 c5! Black has good counterplay. For example: 9.dxc5 Nc6 10.f4 f5 11.Qh3 Qa5! 12.Nge2 Bxc5 13.g4 d4 14.Nb1 Nb4 and Black has the initiative.

5.e5 Nfd7 6.Bxe7 Qxe7 7.Qd2 0-0 8.f4 c5 9.Nf3 Nc6 (D)



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Position after 9…Nc6

Black has attacked White's pawn center with …c5 and intends to intensify the attack with …f6.

If now 10.g3 f6 11.exf6 gxf6! as in the main line, with a promising game for Black.

10.0-0-0 f6 11.exf6 gxf6! 12.g3 cxd4 13.Nxd4 Nb6

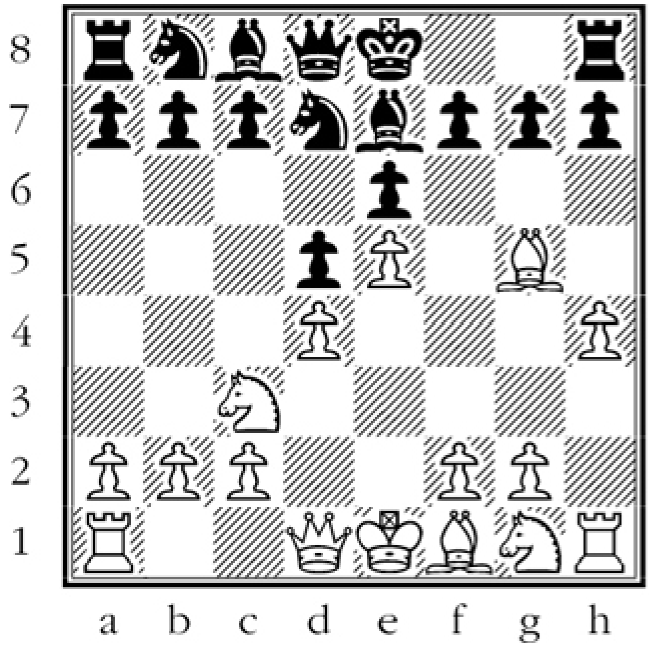
Even game. White may have the better development, but Black has open lines and a powerful pawn mass in the center.

(c) Alekhine's Attack

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e5 Nfd7 6.h4! (D)



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Position after 6.h4!

Black cannot very well accept White’s enterprising pawn offer. After 6…Bxg5 7.hxg5 Qxg5 8.Nh3 Qe7 9.Nf4 Nf8 10.Qg4 White has a murderous lead in development.

If now 6…f6 7.Qh5+ g6 8.exf6! gxh5 9.fxe7 winning back the queen with a very superior endgame for White; or 8…Nxf6 9.Qe2! with strong pressure on Black’s backward e-pawn.

6…c5! 7.Bxe7 Kxe7!

After 7…Qxe7 8.Nb5! Black has a difficult game.

8.Qg4 Kf8 9.Nf3 cxd4! 10.Qxd4 Qb6! 11.Qxb6 axb6

Black has satisfactorily undermined White’s center.

12.0-0-0 Nc6 13.Re1 d4!

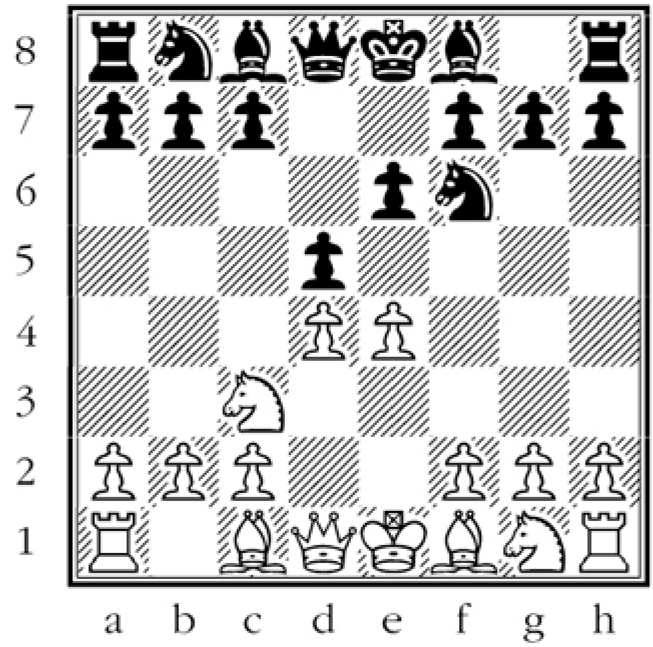
Black has an excellent game, for after the attacked knight moves he can play …Rxa2.

(d) Burn’s Variation

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 (D)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Position after 3…Nf6

If White ends the tension in the center with 4.e5, there follows 4…Nfd7 5.f4 and now Black counters with 5…c5! liquidating White’s valuable d-pawn.

4.Bg5 dxe4

This colorless continuation leaves White with a more aggressive position.

5.Nxe4 Be7 6.Bxf6 Bxf6

Likewise after 6…gxf6 White has the more promising development: 7.Nf3 b6 8.Bc4! Bb7 9.Qe2 c6 10.0-0-0 Qc7 11.Kb1 Nd7 12.Ba6! 0-0-0 13.Bxb7+ Kxb7 14.c4! Black’s pawn position is weakened and he is exposed to attack.

7.Nf3 Nd7 8.c3! Qe7

Or 8…0-0 9.Qc2 e5 10.0-0-0! exd4 11.Nxd4 Bxd4 12.Rxd4 Qe7 13.f4 Nc5 14.Nxc5 Qxc5 15.Bd3 when White has a splendid development and good attacking chances.

9.Qc2 c5 10.dxc5 Nxc5 11.Bb5+ Bd7 12.Bxd7+ Nxd7 13.0-0-0 0-0-0 14.Qa4 Kb8

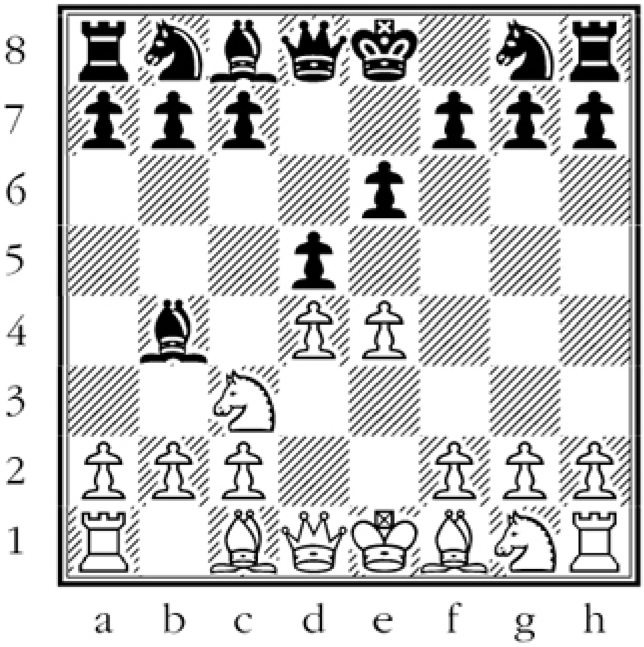
White's game is more comfortable and he has an advantage for the endgame in his queenside majority of pawns.

(e) Winawer Variation

French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 (D)



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Position after 3…Bb4

By pinning White's knight Black counterattacks and thus maintains the fight for control of the center. 4.exd5 would be a colorless reply as 4…exd5 frees Black's light-square bishop.

White can ignore Black's threat, but the results are not particularly attractive, for example 4.a3 Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 dxe4 6.Qg4 Nf6 7.Qxg7 Rg8 8.Qh6 c5 – or 4.Qg4 Nf6 5.Qxg7 Rg8 6.Qh6 c5. In either case, Black has strong counterplay.

4.e5 c5 5.a3!

The best reply to Black's logical counterattack in the center.

5…Bxc3+ 6.bxc3

Whereas Black's remaining bishop has very little scope, White's bishops are very powerful – as in the variation 6…Ne7 7.Qg4 Nf5 8.Bd3 h5 9.Qh3 cxd4 10.cxd4 Qh4 11.Qxh4 Nxh4 12.g3 etc.

6…Qc7 7.Nf3

After Black's last move, he can answer 7.Qg4 with 7…f5.

7…Ne7 8.h4! Bd7

Striving for counterplay. If instead 8…b6 9.h5! h6 10.a4! Ba6 11.Bb5+! Bxb5 12.axb5 and White has the initiative on both wings.

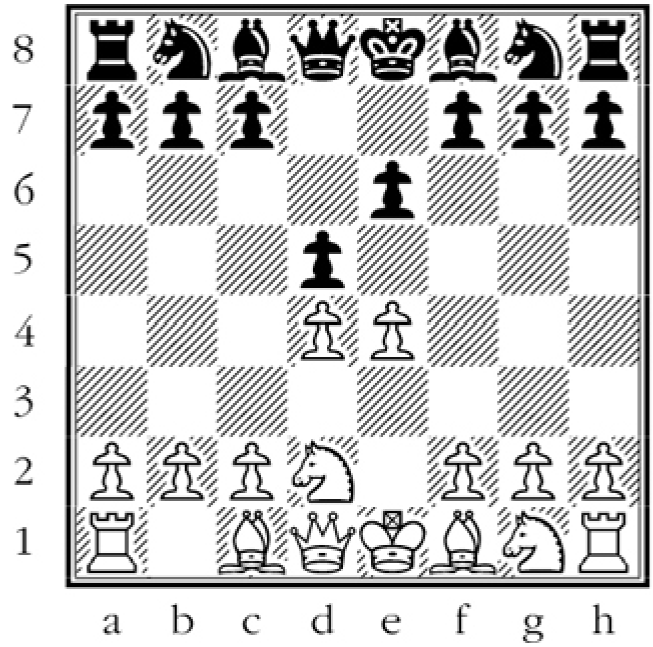
9.h5 h6

White was threatening 10.h6 practically forcing 10…g6 and leaving Black dangerously weak on the dark squares.

10.g4! Ba4 11.Bd3 Nd7 12.g5 Rc8 13.Ra2!

White has a strong initiative on the kingside, where he will be able to open a file before or after Rg1. Black has pressure on White's c2-pawn, but White has adequate defense. White's greater command of the board, supported by the potential power of his bishops, gives him the better game.

(f) Tarrasch Variation
French Defense
White – Black
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 (D)



Position after 3.Nd2

White’s extraordinary third move is playable despite the fact that it blocks his dark-square bishop. The point of this development is that it avoids 3…Bb4, as seen in Variation (e).

3…c5

The classic freeing move. The alternatives give Black a cramped game, for example 3…Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.Bd3 c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.Ne2 cxd4 8.cxd4 etc. Or 3…Nc6 4.Ngf3! Nf6 5.e5 Nd7 6.Nb3 f6 7.exf6! Nxf6 8.Bb5 etc.

4.Ngf3 a6!

This gives Black a much more comfortable game than 4…Nc6, for example 5.exd5 exd5 6.Bb5! Bd6 7.0-0 Nge7 8.dxc5! Bxc5 9.Nb3 Bb6 10.Be3! Bxe3 11.Bxc6+! bxc6 12.fxe3 and White has strong pressure on the dark squares.

5.exd5 exd5 6.dxc5 Bxc5

Black has an isolated d-pawn, but he can develop his pieces rapidly and the diagonal of his light-square bishop has been opened.

7.Nb3 Ba7! 8.Bg5 Nf6 9.Nbd4 0-0 10.Be2 Qd6 11.0-0 Nc6! 12.Be3 Bb8!

Black has real attacking chances and a fine initiative. His admirable development outweighs the disadvantage of the isolated d-pawn.

(g) Advance Variation

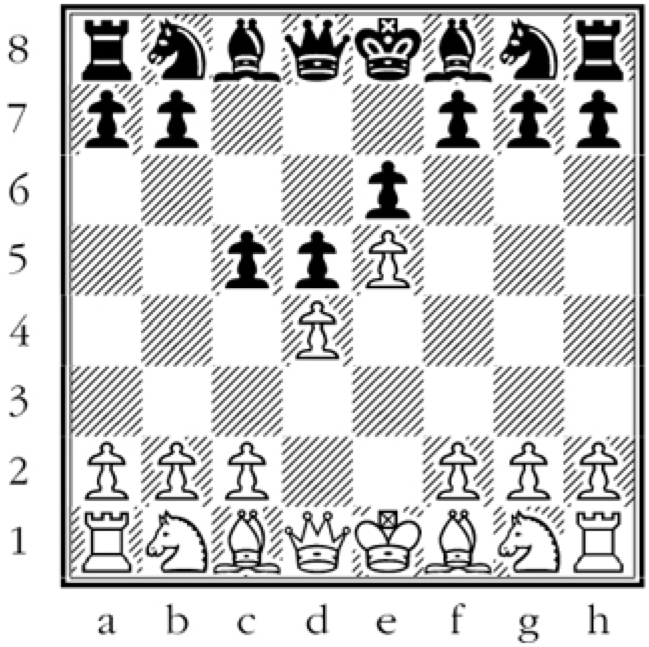
French Defense

White – Black

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5!? c5!

This is an extremely trying variation for both players. By advancing his pawn to e5, White creates a wedge in the kingside which among other things prevents Black's knight from reaching its best square at f6. In general, White's intention when he advances the e-pawn is to leave Black with a permanently constricted position.

Naturally Black is not going to resign himself to being smothered to death. He intends to fight back, and the method he chooses is to try to undermine White's advanced e-pawn by removing its support (White's d-pawn). (D)



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Position after 3…c5!

By playing …c5 – always the logical counterattack to e4-e5 – Black strives for counterplay on the queenside and in the center in order to neutralize White's constricting pressure on the kingside.

4.c3 Nc6 5.Nf3 Qb6

Superficially 6.Bd3 looks like a good reply, for if 6…cxd4 7.cxd4 Nxd4??? 8.Nxd4 Qxd4 9.Bb5+ winning the queen. But Black plays 7…Bd7!, leaving White nothing better than 8.Be2.

6.Be2 cxd4 7.cxd4 Nge7 8.b3 Nf5 9.Bb2 Bb4+

Black's pressure on the d-pawn is so strong that White cannot interpose to this check.

10.Kf1 0-0 11.g4 Nh6

After 12.Rg1 Black plays 12…f6 when the fight for control of the center will rage on. Prospects are even, with chances for both sides.

Sicilian Defense

Like the French Defense, the Sicilian Defense immediately puts a veto on White's intended choice of opening. The characteristic 1…c5 is more aggressive than the French, and also riskier. If you like a complicated game with chances for both sides, the Sicilian is an ideal defense.

An important point to remember is this: White generally plays an early d2-d4 in order to get more space for his pieces in the center. After Black captures White's d-pawn with his c-pawn, the c-file is half open (from Black's side). By playing his queen rook – and sometimes his queen as well – to the c-file, Black can often exert considerable pressure along the file.

On the other hand, White has an important attacking motif in advancing his f-pawn, f2-f4. This often gives him a powerful position in the middle game, when he threatens e4-e5 or f4-f5.

(a) Dragon Variation

Sicilian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Be2

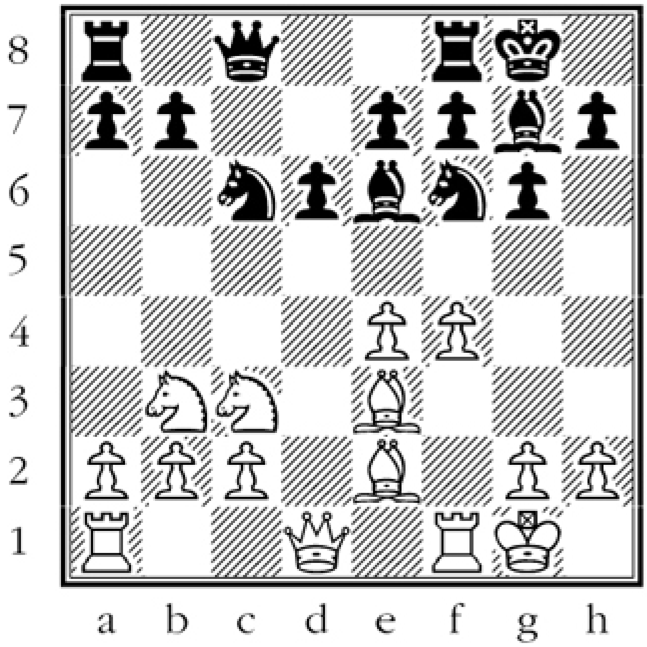
If 6.Be3 g6 7.Qd2 Bg7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.Be2 intending a pawn-storming attack on the kingside. However, after 9…Nxd4 10.Bxd4 Qa5 Black has good counterplay.

6…g6 7.Be3 Bg7 8.0-0 0-0

Here the simplifying move 8…Ng4? looks tempting, for if 9.Bxg4 Bxg4 10.Qxg4? Nxd4 and Black holds his own. But instead White plays 10.Nxc6! and no matter how Black replies, he loses a piece.

9.Nb3 Be6 10.f4 Qc8!

Chiefly played to prevent f4-f5, which may lead to troublesome complications. Thus after the alternative 10…Na5 there might follow 11.f5 Bc4 12.Nxa5 Bxe2 13.Qxe2 Qxa5 14.g4! Nd7 15.Nd5! and White has a strong initiative. (D)



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Position after 10…Qc8!

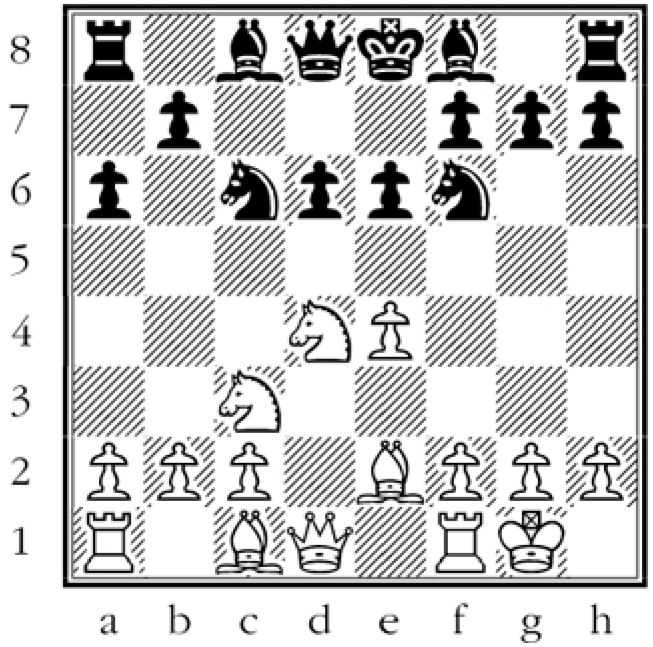
If White plays 11.h3 (intending g2-g4 and f4-f5), Black counters energetically with 11…Rd8!. Then if 12.g4 d5! or 12.Bf3 Bc4!. *Black has a solid position with good prospects for the middlegame. Note that his fianchettoed bishop exerts strong pressure along the long diagonal.*

(b) Scheveningen Variation

Sicilian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Be2 e6 7.0-0 a6 (D)



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Position after 7…a6

Compare this pawn formation with the one in Diagram 62. Black's bishops have very little scope.

Aside from the following line, White can also proceed with 8.Be3 Qc7 9.f4 Be7 10.Nb3 b5 11.Bf3 Bb7 12.Qe1! followed by Qg3 with a strong attacking formation.

8.Kh1 Qc7 9.f4 Be7 10.Bf3 0-0 11.g4! Bd7 12.g5 Ne8 13.a4 Na5

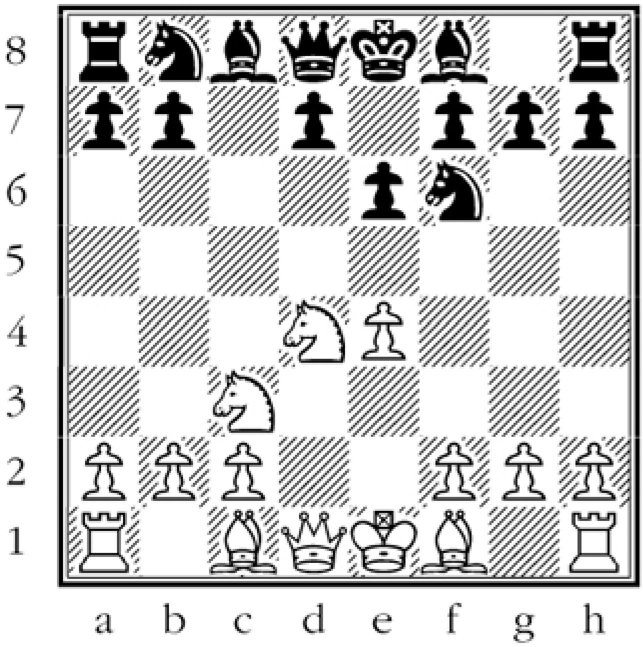
White continues 14.f5! with a powerful initiative, thanks to the advance of his kingside pawns. Black's position is constricted and limited to purely passive defense.

(c) 2…e6 Variation

Sicilian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 (D)



Position after 5.Nc3

Black’s position is difficult. If he plays 5…Bb4 there follows 6.e5! Nd5 7.Bd2 Nxc3 8.bxc3 Be7 9.Qg4 with an aggressive position for White.

5…Nc6 6.Ndb5

Black’s game remains difficult because of the early advance of his e-pawn. If Black tries to prevent Nd6+ with 6…d6, the reply 7.Bf4 is embarrassing: note that 7…Ne5? is wrong because of 8.Qd4! winning a pawn, while if 7…e5 8.Bg5 and Black has a bad “hole” at d5.

6…Bb4 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.Nxc3 d5 9.exd5 exd5 10.Bd3 0-0 11.0-0

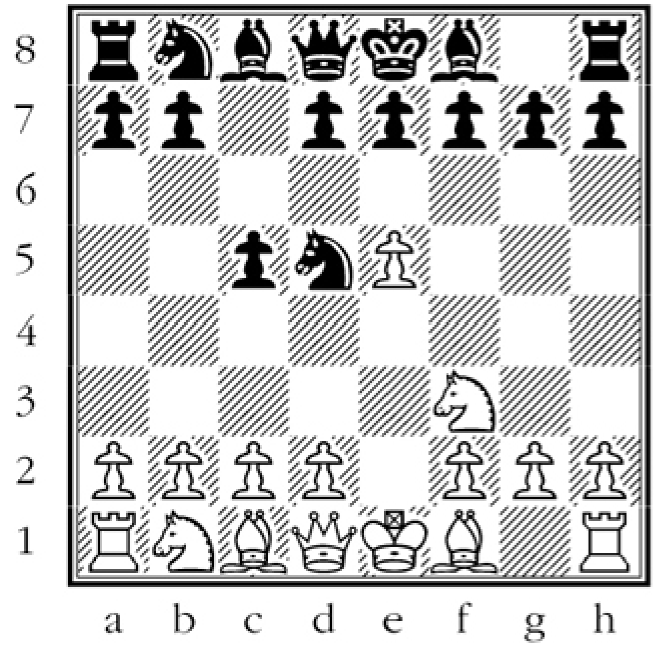
White’s position is definitely more promising. His two bishops are a distinct asset for the endgame, and Black’s isolated pawn is just as distinct a liability in an ending.

(d) Nimzo-Rubinstein Defense

Sicilian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.e5 Nd5 (D)



Position after 3…Nd5

This line of play is a forerunner of Alekhine’s Defense. Black allows his king knight to be driven away in the hope that White’s e-pawn will be weakened by advancing – a futile hope.

4.d4! cxd4 5.Qxd4! e6 6.Bc4! Nc6 7.Qe4 Nb6

This is one opening in which an early development of the queen does no harm, as White’s queen has a commanding position and Black’s development is backward.

8.Bb3 Na5 9.Nc3 Nxb3 10.axb3 d5 11.exd6 Bxd6

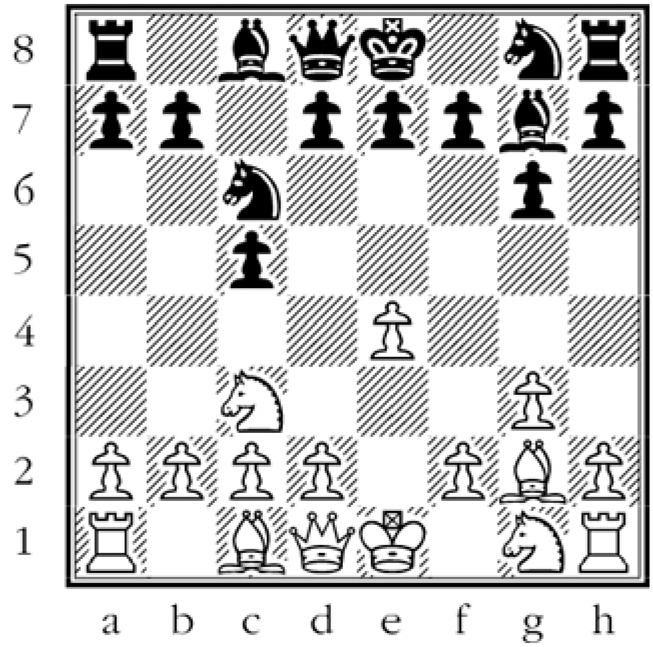
White has superior development and open lines. Here is one likely way for him to gain the initiative: 12.0-0 0-0 13.Rd1 Qe7 14.Nb5! Bb8 15.Be3 and White wins a pawn (his chief threat is 16.Bxb6).

(e) Closed Sicilian

Sicilian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 (D)



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Position after 4…Bg7

White deliberately keeps the game closed, avoiding d2-d4. He trusts to superior maneuvering ability to obtain an advantage. However, with careful play Black maintains equality.

5.d3 e6! 6.Be3 Qa5!

More promising than 6…Nd4 7.Nce2! with a view to dislodging the advanced knight by c2-c3. (If 7…Nxe2 8.Nxe2 Bxb2 9.Rb1 Qa5+ 10.Bd2 Qxa2 11.Rxb2! Qxb2 12.Bc3!.) **7.Nge2 Nd4 8.Qd2 Ne7 9.Nc1 0-0 10.0-0 d6**

Even game. Black has done well to centralize his powerful queen knight, supported directly by the fianchettoed bishop. White must play for kingside attack by f2-f4 etc.

(f) Wing Gambit
Sicilian Defense
White – Black

1.e4 c5 2.b4

This is the Wing Gambit, played with the idea of getting a big lead in development and a powerful pawn center (through the removal of Black's c-pawn).

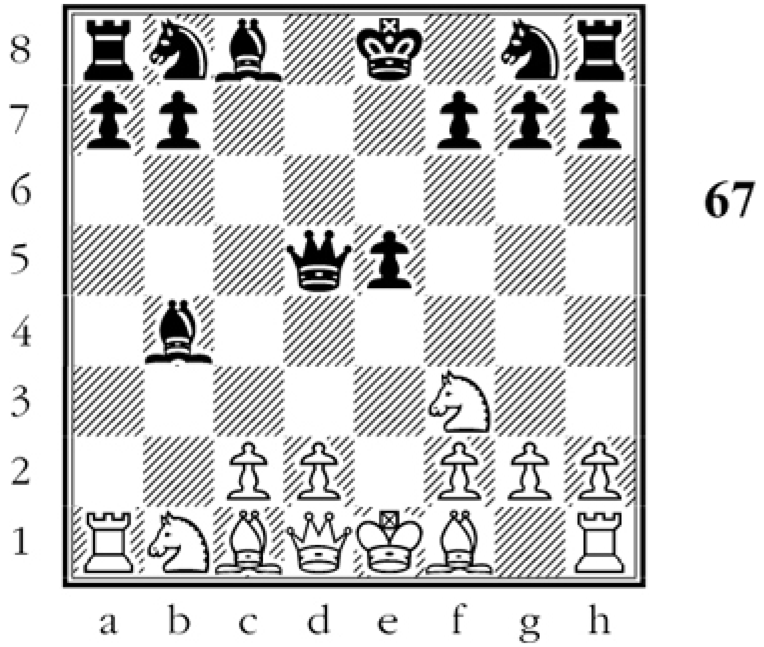
2…cxb4 3.a3 d5!

Energetic counterplay in the center is the key to Black's policy against the gambit. White's reply is virtually forced, for after 4.e5? Nc6 5.d4 Qc7 6.Nf3 Bg4 Black has a positional as well as a material advantage.

4.exd5 Qxd5 5.Nf3

Black was threatening 5…Qe4+.

5…e5 6.axb4 Bxb4 (D)



Position after 6…Bxb4

The gambit has turned out to be a miserable failure, for Black is ahead in development as well as material!

Black is well prepared for complications, for example 7.Na3 Bd7! 8.Nc4 Nc6! 9.Nb6 Qe4+ 10.Be2 Rd8 with a very good game. Or 8.Bb2 Nc6 9.Nb5 Rc8! 10.Nxa7 Nxa7 11.Rxa7 e4! 12.Bxg7 exf3 13.gxf3 Bc5! with a winning attack.

7.c3 Bc5 8.Na3 Nf6 9.Nb5 0-0! 10.Be2

Note that 10.Nc7 is answered by 10…Bxf2+!.

10…e4! 11.Nfd4 Nc6 12.Nc7 Qg5 13.Nxa8

Or 13.Nxc6 Qxg2 14.Rf1 bxc6 15.Nxa8 Ng4 and Black must win.

13…Qxg2 14.Rf1 Ne5

Black has a winning attack, for example 15.d3 Bh3 16.dxe4 Nxe4 etc.

Caro-Kann Defense

Like the French Defense, the Caro-Kann Defense (1.e4 c6) allows White to build a broad pawn center and then challenges that center with 2…d5. But, since Black plays 1…c6 instead of 1…e6, it follows that in most variations his light-square bishop is not imprisoned.

This is definitely a defense for players who want a solid, even position with little chance of complications. A player who wants to avoid risks and who is satisfied with a draw should favor this defense.

(a) Classical Variation

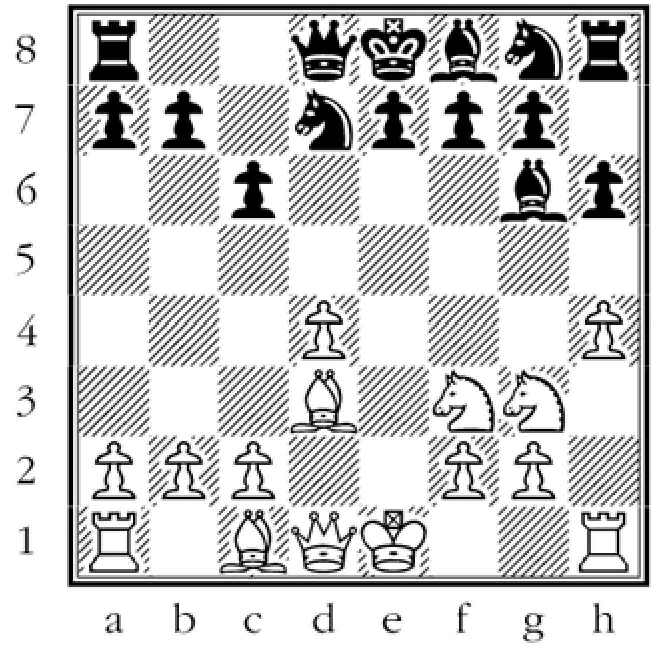
Caro-Kann Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5

Note that White has little to gain from 3.e5 Bf5!. For example 4.Bd3 Bxd3 5.Qxd3 e6 6.Nf3 Qb6 7.0-0 c5 etc.

3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Ng3 Bg6 6.Nf3 Nd7 7.h4 h6 8.Bd3 (D)



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Position after 8.Bd3

White has decided to exchange bishops, as Black’s light-square bishop was too well placed. The exchange increases White’s lead in development and gains time for castling on the queenside.

8…Bxd3 9.Qxd3 e6 10.Bd2 Ngf6 11.0-0-0 Qc7 12.Kb1 0-0-0 13.c4! c5

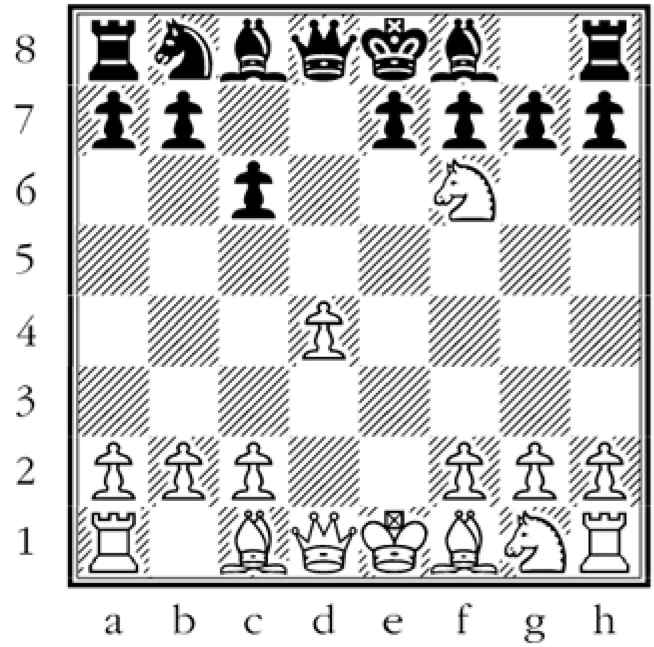
White continues 14.Bc3! with distinctly more freedom for his pieces and strong pressure on the center. However, Black has no weak points and is well equipped for careful defense.

(b) 3.Nc3 Variation with 4…Nf6

Caro-Kann Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ (D)



Position after 5.Nxf6+

Whichever way Black captures he remains with a theoretical disadvantage, as his doubled pawns are a positional weakness. White, on the other hand, has a clear majority of pawns on the queenside, which will eventually be converted into a passed pawn.

5…exf6

Or 5…gxf6 6.Ne2! with a favorable setup for White, for example 6…Bf5 7.Ng3 Bg6 8.h4 h6 9.h5 Bh7 10.c3 Qb6 11.Bc4 etc.

6.Nf3 Bg4 7.Be2 Bd6 8.0-0 0-0 9.c4! Re8 10.Re1 Nd7 11.Bd2 Qc7 12.h3! Bh5 13.Bc3!

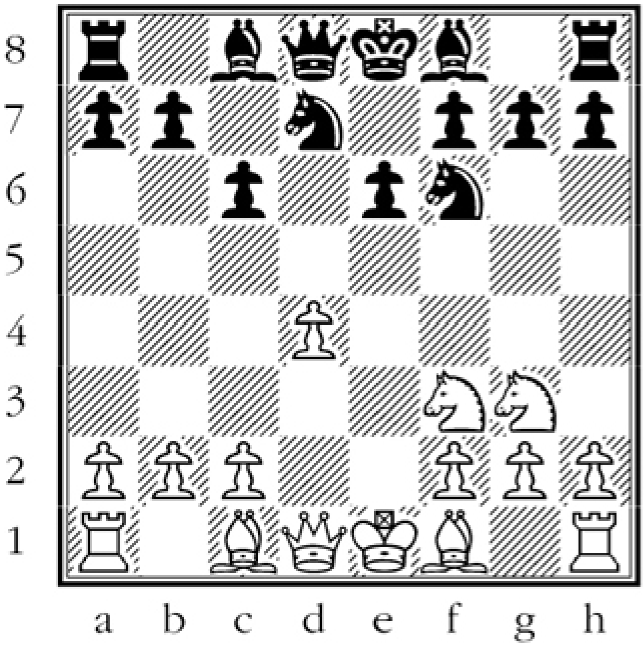
White has greater command of the board and his potential passed pawn (after an eventual d4-d5) gives him a marked positional advantage.

(c) 3.Nc3 Variation with 4…Nd7

Caro-Kann Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Ng3 e6 (D)



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Position after 6…e6

By avoiding 4…Nf6 Black has eliminated the possibility of getting doubled pawns. However, his position shows signs of becoming unpleasantly constricted. (His light-square bishop has no move!) **7.Bd3 Bd6 8.0-0 0-0 9.Qe2 Qc7 10.Ne4 Bf4**

White's development has been more efficient and he has more room for his pieces.

(d) Exchange Variation with 4.c4

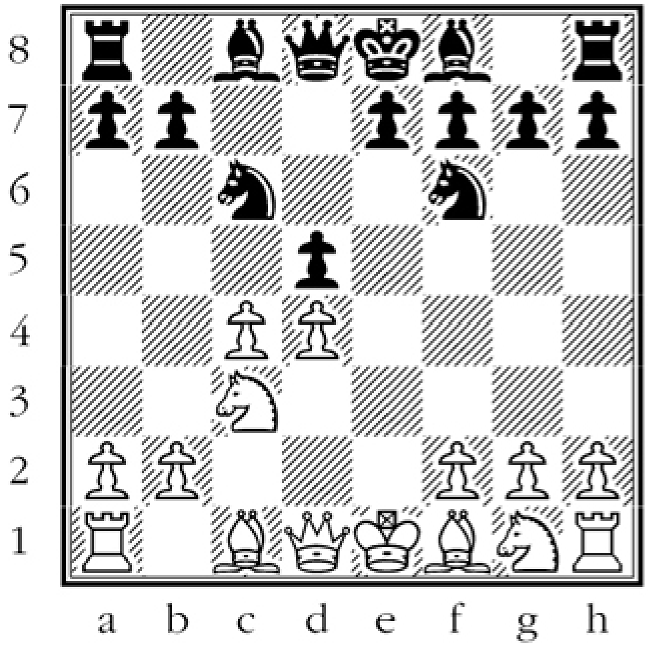
Caro-Kann Defense

White – Black

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4

Note that 4.Bd3 Nc6 5.c3 Nf6 6.Bf4 g6 7.Nf3 Bg7 gives Black an easy game.

4…Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 (D)



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Position after 5…Nc6

White's only hope for initiative is to put more pressure on the center – hence 6.Bg5 – but Black can parry adequately.

6.Bg5 e6 7.Nf3 Be7 8.c5 0-0 9.Rc1 Ne4! 10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.Be2 Rd8!

Black has equal prospects, as he is able to free himself after 12.0-0 with 12…e5!.

Alekhine's Defense

This vehement counterattack is considered premature, as it leads to a difficult game for Black. After 1.e4, Black plays the dashing 1…Nf6. The idea is to provoke the advance of White's center pawns to the point where they become weak. Actual practice has not borne out this attractive theory, and therefore this defense is best avoided in favor of some more solid line of play.

(a) Four Pawns' Attack

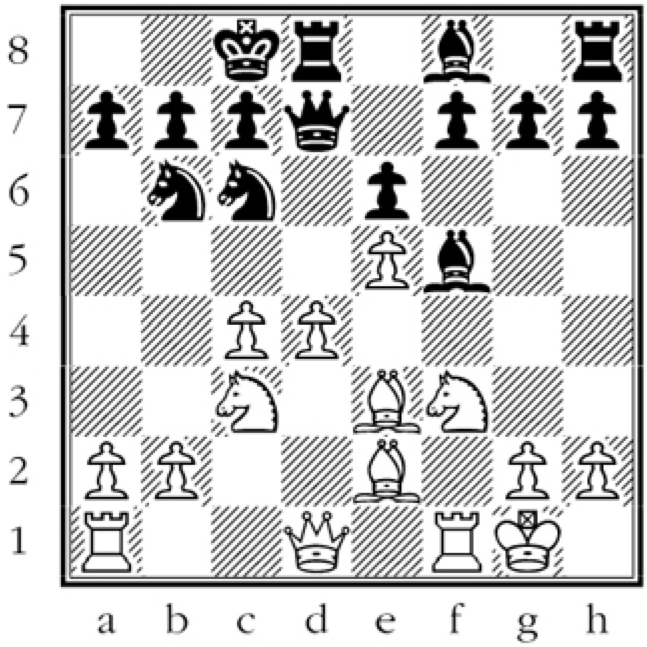
Alekhine's Defense

White – Black

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.c4 Nb6 4.d4 d6 5.f4 dxe5

Black hopes to undermine White's broad center. The attempt is destined to fail.

6.fxe5 Nc6 7.Be3 Bf5 8.Nc3 e6 9.Nf3 Qd7 10.Be2 0-0-0 11.0-0 (D)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Position after 11.0-0

The indicated pawn push 12.d5 has tremendous power, for example 11…Be7 12.d5! exd5 13.Bxb6 axb6 14.cxd5 Nb4 15.Nd4! g6 16.Nxf5 gxf5 17.Rxf5! Nxd5 (if 17…Qxf5 18.Bg4) 18.e6!! fxe6 19.Rxd5! exd5 20.Bg4 winning.

11…f6 12.exf6 gxf6 13.d5! Ne5 14.Bxb6 Nxf3+ 15.Bxf3! axb6 16.Nb5

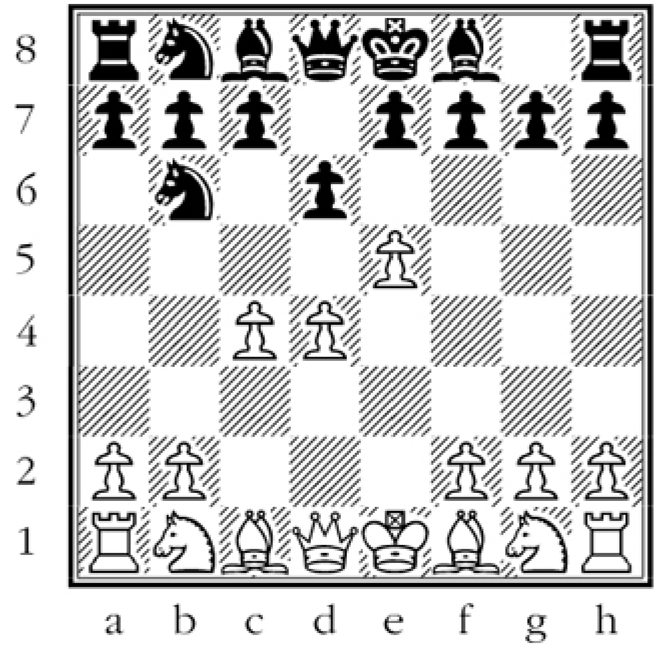
White has a winning attack with Qa4. He has taken energetic advantage of the poor position of Black's pieces.

(b) Three Pawns' Variation

Alekhine's Defense

White – Black

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.c4 Nb6 4.d4 d6 (D)



Position after 4…d6

Now White decides to exchange pawns – a less aggressive but safer course than the one he followed in the previous variation.

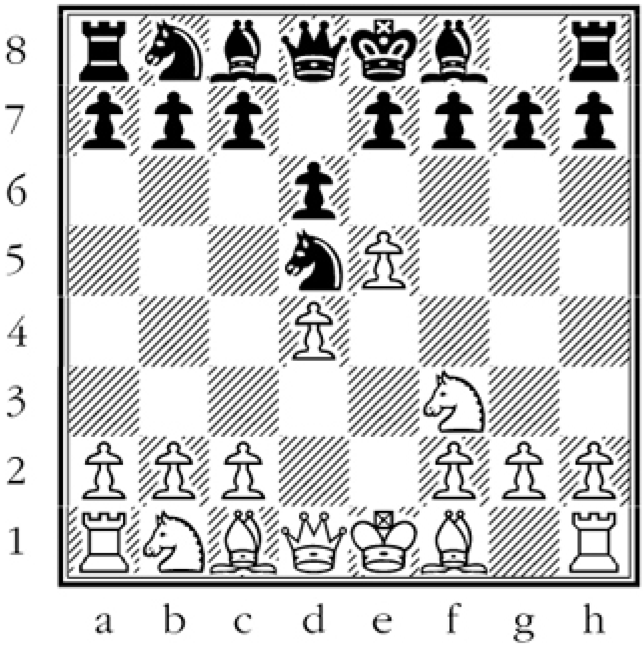
5.exd6 exd6

Here 5…cxd6 is definitely inferior: 6.d5! g6 7.Be3! Bg7 8.Bd4! and the removal of the valuable fianchettoed bishop breaks the spine of Black's position.

6.Nc3 Nc6 7.Be3 Be7 8.Bd3 0-0 9.Nge2! Bg4 10.0-0 Re8 11.h3 Bh5

White continues 12.Qd2, remaining with a freer and more promising position.

(c) Modern Variation
Alekhine's Defense
White – Black
1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 (D)



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Position after 4.Nf3

In this variation, White concentrates on quiet development. However, here too Black's king knight ends up poorly posted at b6. This placement is definitely one of the drawbacks of the defense.

4…Bg4 5.Be2 Nc6 6.0-0 e6 7.c4 Nb6 8.exd6 cxd6 9.b3 Be7 10.Be3 0-0 11.Nc3 d5

Otherwise d4-d5 drives the queen knight away.

12.c5 Nd7 13.b4!

With his queenside majority of pawns White has a decided advantage. If Black tries 13…Nxb4 then 14.Rb1 recovers the pawn and leaves White with an even greater advantage – a passed c-pawn.

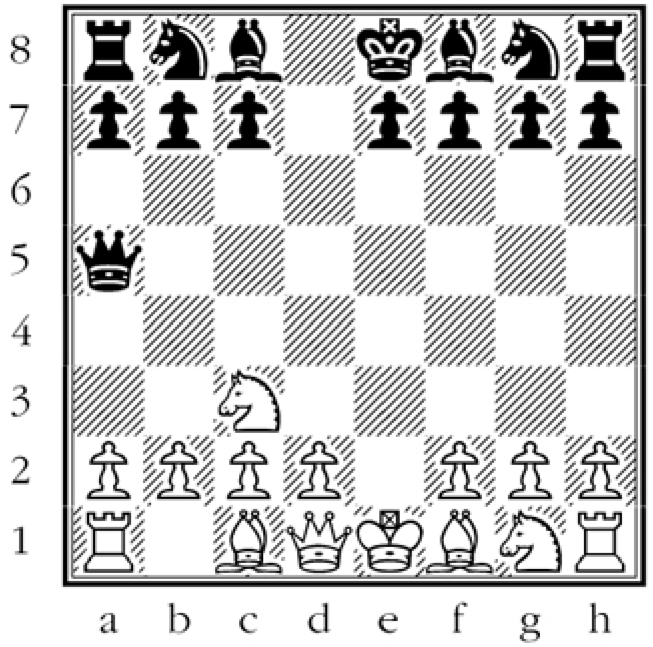
Scandinavian Defense

This is definitely an inferior defense. The early moves of Black's queen lose time, with further loss of time indicated. This comes about because after 1.e4, Black replies 1…d5 instead of preparing his pawn move with 1…e6 (French Defense) or with 1…c6 (Caro-Kann Defense).

Scandinavian Defense

White – Black

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 (D)



Position after 3…Qa5

Black’s faulty development of the queen has allowed White to gain time for his own development. Later on, White will gain more time by further attacks on the black queen.

4.d4 Nf6

Another possibility is 4…e5 5.dxe5 Qxe5+ 6.Be2 followed by 7.Nf3 driving away the black queen with gain of time.

5.Nf3 Bg4 6.h3! Bh5

Or 6…Bxf3 7.Qxf3 and White remains ahead in development and also has the positional advantage of two bishops against bishop and knight.

7.g4! Bg6 8.Ne5! c6

Preparing a retreat for his queen in view of the threat of Nc4.

9.h4! Ne4 10.Bd2 Qb6

Even worse is 10…Nxd2 11.Qxd2 (threatening to win a piece with h4-h5) 11…f6 12.Nxg6 hxg6 13.Bd3 when Black’s kingside pawn formation has been damaged irreparably.

11.Nxg6 Nxc3 12.Bxc3 hxg6 13.Qd2 e6 14.0-0-0

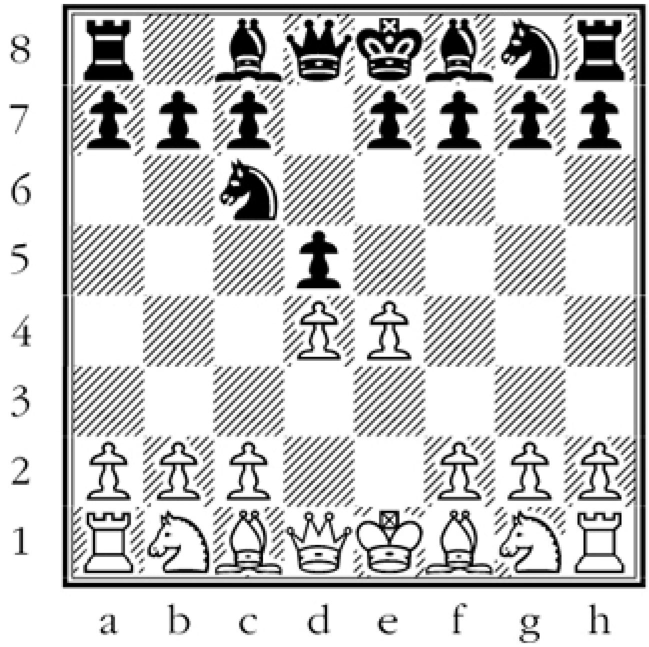
White continues 15.Bg2, and with his greater freedom of action and his two bishops against bishop and knight, has a clear positional advantage.

Black's game has no compensating features.

Nimzovitch Defense

This is another mediocre defense that has little to recommend it. The immediate development of Black's queen knight (1…Nc6 in answer to 1.e4) is untimely, and generally leaves White with a substantial lead in development.

(a) 2…d5 Variation
Nimzovitch Defense
White – Black
1.e4 Nc6 2.d4 d5 (D)



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Position after 2…d5

White can now push by with 3.e5, but this allows Black to develop comfortably with 3…Bf5. Hence White prefers to try a different way.

3.Nc3 e6

After 3…dxe4, White disrupts his opponent's position with 4.d5!. Then on 4…Ne5 he can either stop to regain his pawn, or else play a gambit for rapid development with 5.f3!.

4.Nf3 Bb4 5.e5 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Na5

Now White has excellent attacking prospects.

7.a4 Ne7 8.Bd3 b6 9.Nd2! c5 10.Qg4 c4 11.Be2 Nf5 12.Nf3

White has all the play and a clear initiative. His dark-square bishop can take up a strong position at a3.

(b) 2…e5 Variation

Nimzovitch Defense

White – Black

1.e4 Nc6 2.d4 e5 3.dxe5 Nxe5 4.Nc3 Bc5

Another way is 4…Nf6 after which White gets the upper hand with 5.f4 Nc6 6.e5 Ng8 7.Nf3 d6 8.Bb5 etc.

5.f4 Ng6 6.Nf3 d6 7.Bc4 Be6 8.Qe2 Bxc4 9.Qxc4 Qd7 10.f5

White's pieces are actively posted and his position holds out great promise. Black's forces are scattered and no good plan of development is available.

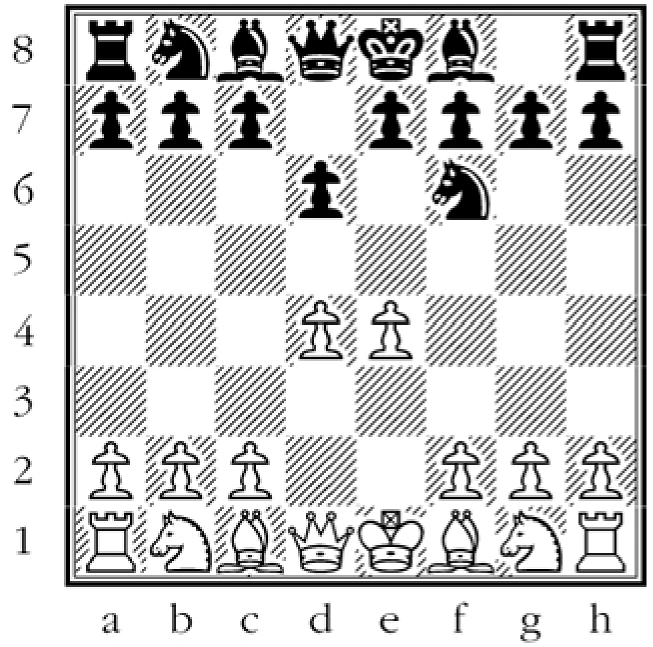
Pirc Defense

This line of play (1…d6 in reply to 1.e4) is as timid as Alekhine's Defense is brash. White maintains clear superiority by virtue of his better development and greater command of the board.

Pirc Defense

White – Black

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 (D)



Position after 2…Nf6

Black counterattacks against White’s e-pawn, which cannot very well advance. Consequently White protects the menaced pawn.

3.Nc3 g6 4.f4! Bg7 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Bd3 c5

Black makes a flank thrust against White’s formidable pawn center.

7.d5 e6 8.dxe6 Bxe6 9.f5! Bc8 10.0-0 Nc6

White’s development is much more active and aggressive. Particularly troublesome is his threat to obtain a lasting bind with Bg5 followed by Nd5. Black is limited to passive play.

Book Eight

How to Play the d-pawn Openings

Queen's Gambit Declined

Since the turn of the century this opening, beginning with 1.d4, has been the favorite line of play used by the masters. It is much less popular among average players, who have some psychological difficulties with it. When they have White, they do not care to play 1.d4. Yet when they have Black, they are exceedingly uncomfortable when their opponent starts with 1.d4.

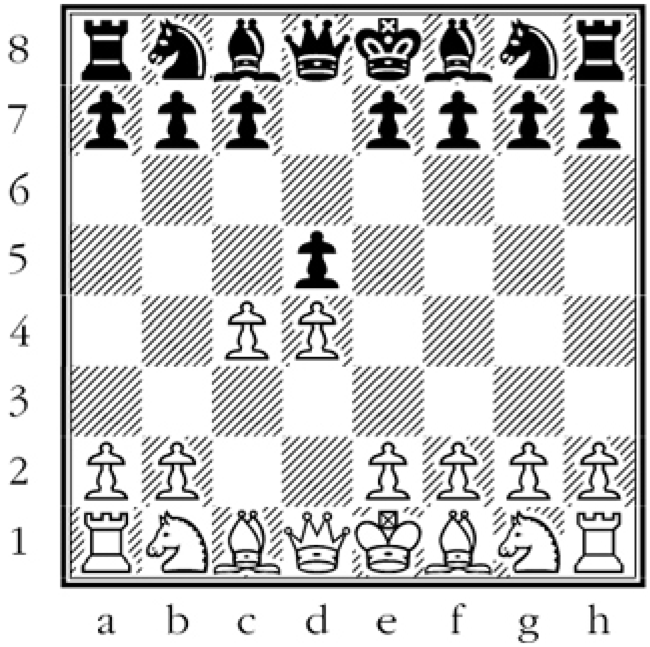
Consequently the Queen's Gambit is a formidable weapon, both technically and psychologically. The player who is reasonably familiar with its fine points has a marked advantage over his rivals.

What makes the Queen's Gambit such a dreaded weapon is that White often obtains much greater freedom of action for his pieces. As a result, he gets a frequently decisive command of the board. Sometimes this takes the form of slow strangulation of Black's forces; sometimes, through his superior mobility, White is able to win by extraordinarily brilliant play.

This explains why most players are afraid to play Black against the gambit. They either know from dreadful experience or from reputation of this opening that they are about to confront a very trying ordeal. Yet, as has been explained, these same players, when they have White, will avoid playing the Queen's Gambit! Rightly or wrongly, they feel they do not know enough about it.

The Queen's Gambit starts with these moves:

1.d4 d5 2.c4 (D)



Position after 2.c4

White threatens to obtain an overwhelming pawn center with cxd5. If Black plays 2…dxc4, White may still very well obtain the overwhelming pawn center.

White's offer of a pawn by 2.c4 constitutes the Queen's Gambit. A gambit, as you know, is an opening in which material is offered speculatively for the purpose of gaining development or other advantages. The e-pawn opening gambits, such as the King's Gambit or the Evans Gambit, have a highly speculative character. The Queen's Gambit, in most forms, is less of a gamble, as White can generally recover the pawn with ease. (For example, if Black plays 2…dxc4, White can recover the pawn immediately with 3.Qa4+ if he wants to.) Thus we see that there is little about the gambit that can be called speculative. On the other hand, 2.c4 embodies a definite threat. *White is momentarily threatening to remove Black's center pawn.* If he gets rid of Black's d-pawn, White can soon continue with e2-e4, obtaining a broad pawn center and leaving Black with a hopeless inferiority in space. (White, in the position of Diagram 1, threatens 3.cxd5 Qxd5 4.Nc3 followed by 5. e4 with an overwhelming position.) Our main problem is: *how is Black to maintain a firm foothold in the center?* To maintain a hold in the center is essential for Black. If he loses out in the center, he will be faced with the danger of White's getting overwhelming control of the board. (This is exactly what happens when Black is not familiar with the pitfalls of this opening.) The object of our treatment of this vital opening is to familiarize you with the basic schemes that must be followed by White and Black. You will see what White aims for, and how Black parries the dangers involved. After you read this section, you should be able to play the Queen's Gambit Declined for either side, with a fair amount of confidence.

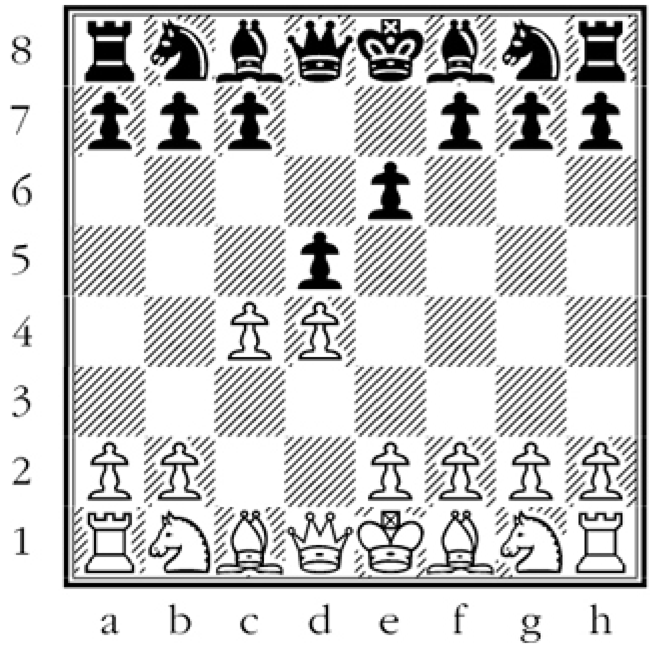
Queen's Gambit Declined 2…e6 Defense

To ensure his hold on the center, Black must support his d-pawn *with a pawn move*. Then, if White plays cxd5, Black replies e(or c)xd5. In this way he keeps a pawn at the d5-square and maintains a solid foothold in the center.

Black has two supporting pawn moves that will answer the purpose: 2…e6 (treated in this section) and 2…c6 (treated in the next section).

So let us see the consequences of 2…e6.

2…e6 (D)



2

Position after 2…e6

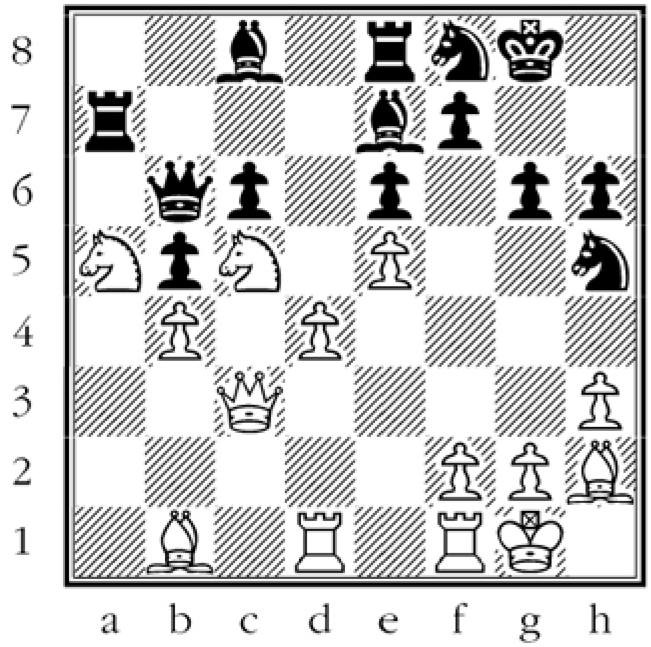
Black now has a firm foothold in the center, but a new problem has arisen for him: how is he to develop his light-square bishop?

By playing 2…e6, Black has blocked the diagonal of his light-square bishop. This piece is solidly hemmed in by the black pawn at e6, which is why the bishop is sometimes known as “the problem child of the Queen’s Gambit.”

It is this serious loss of mobility which often leads to defeat for Black. If he fails to bring out the bishop, his development remains inadequate for the rest of the game, giving White an advantage which often reaches right down into the ending. Worse yet, many a player of the black pieces is not even aware of this danger!

However, since we do see the problem, how are we to solve it? There are two possible ways: (a) to strive for …e5, which will open the bishop’s diagonal, or (b) to fianchetto his bishop by playing …b6 or …b5. These, then, are generally Black’s objectives. Where he fails to achieve them, his light-square bishop’s lack of mobility may often lose the game for him.

Diagram 3 shows the consequences of Black’s failing to solve the problem of the light-square bishop. (D)

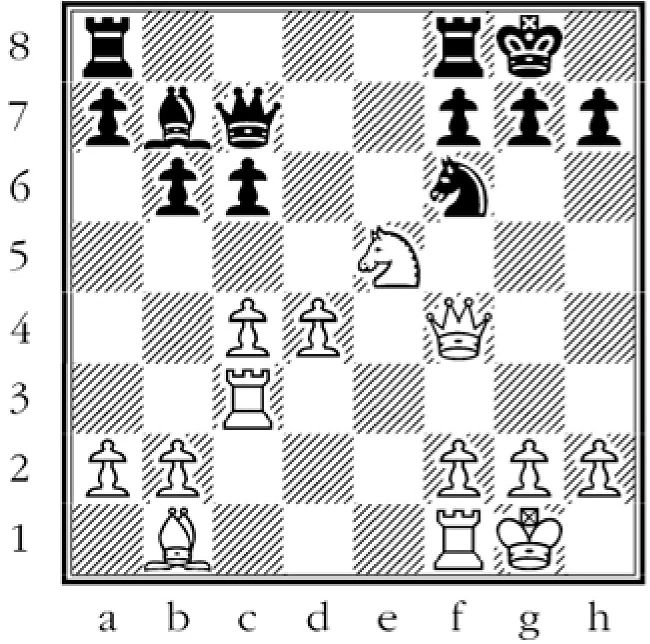


3

No matter how Black turns and squirms, he cannot develop his light-square bishop. It is hemmed in in all directions by black pawns on light squares (his e-, c-, and b-pawns).

When we turn to specific variations, we find that they revolve to a considerable extent about this problem. But White has other trumps that Black must watch out for.

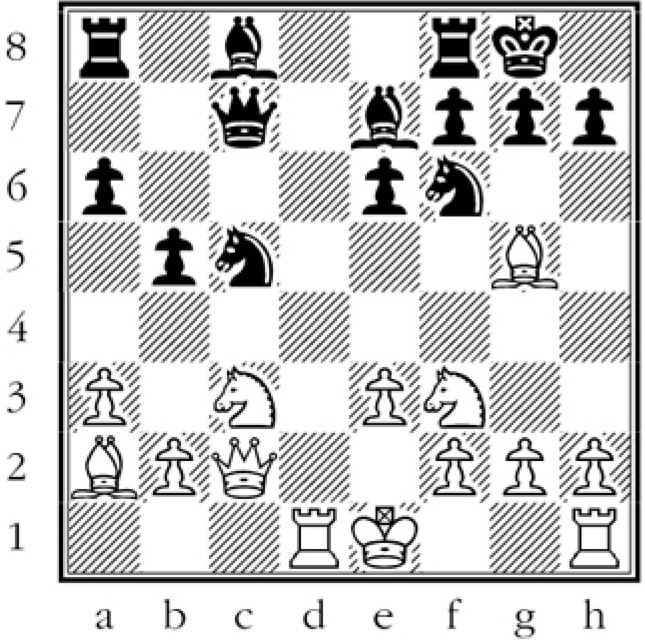
Thus, White can often post his king knight on e5 very effectively. Here the knight has a magnificent center outpost, radiating power in all directions. An example of this is seen in Diagram 4. White's queen, knight, and bishop aim powerfully at the kingside, while his rook on c3 is poised for Rh3 or Rg3. (D)



4

If Black tries 1…Nd7 (to get rid of White's knight), the sequel might be 2.Rh3 h6 3.Rxh6!! gxh6 (or 3…f6 4.Rh8+!! Kxh8 5.Qh4+ Kg8 6.Qh7#) 4.Qg3+ Kh8 5.Ng6+! fxg6 6.Qxc7.

Another danger (partly illustrated in the play arising from Diagram 4) is that White's light-square bishop can operate formidably on the b1–h7 diagonal, leading to the heart of Black's castled position. This menace becomes even more drastic if White's queen is on the same diagonal, as in Diagram 5. (D)



5

White plays 1.Bb1 (with the threat of 2.Bxf6 Bxf6 3.Qxh7#). Black stops this with 1…g6, but there follows 2.Bxf6 Bxf6 3.Ne4! Be7 4.b4! and White wins a piece.

Finally, you must remember that White's second move in the Queen's Gambit Declined (2.c4) often allows him to open the c-file and post his queen rook powerfully on it. (An example of this appears on page 257.) Black must be in a position to neutralize this pressure, and the best way for him to do it is to aim for a fairly early …c5, assuring himself counterplay for his own rooks on the c-file.

Thus you see that the dangers Black must meet are many, varied, and formidable. Yet there is no reason to despair. If Black is unaware of the dangers, there is a strong likelihood that he will succumb to them. If he is aware of them, however, he can take countermeasures in good time.

(a) Orthodox Defense

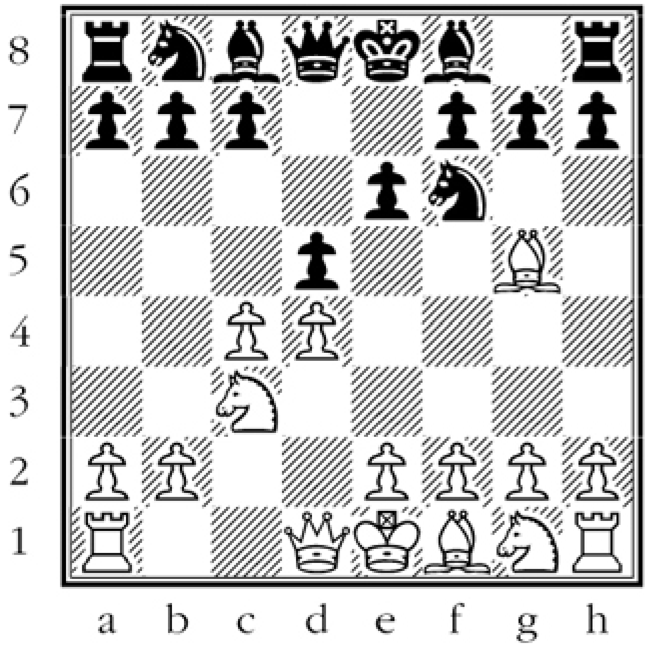
Queen's Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6

Now White has the choice of bringing out his queen knight or king knight. 3.Nf3 is less exact, as it may lead to variations (e), (f), or (g), which give Black an easier game that after 3.Nc3.

3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 (D)



6

Position after 4.Bg5

By now playing 4…Nbd7, Black sets one of the most popular traps in the whole range of the openings: 5.cxd5 exd5 6.Nxd5?? Nxd5! 7.Bxd8 Bb4+ 8.Qd2 Bxd2+ 9.Kxd2 Kxd8 and Black has won a piece!

4…Nbd7

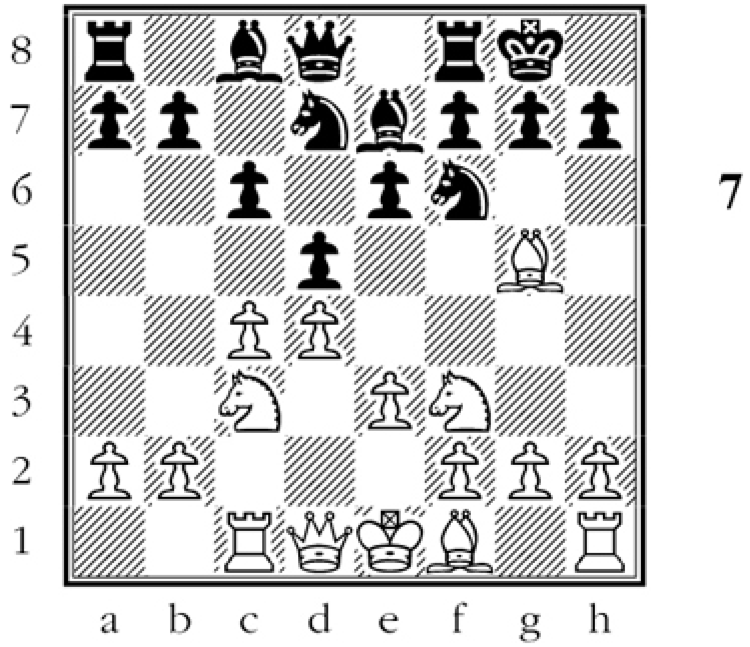
It doesn't matter whether Black plays 4…Nbd7 or 4…Be7. But if he wishes to adopt the Cambridge Springs Defense – Variation (c), he must play 4…Nbd7.

5.e3 Be7 6.Nf3 0-0 7.Rc1!

The rook move exercises a powerful restraining grip on Black's game. It sets up the potential pressure of the rook on the c-file.

7…c6

Temporarily neutralizing the pressure of White's rook along the c-file. Of course, Black still means to play …c5 at a suitable moment later on. (D)



Position after 7…c6

Black must think hard about the problem of developing his light-square bishop. Note that at this moment the bishop does not have a single move!

8.Bd3

This is a critical position, and Black can easily go wrong. In one game, for example, the play was 8…b6? 9.cxd5 Nxd5 10.Nxd5 cxd5 11.Bxe7 Qxe7 12.Rc7! Qb4+ 13.Qd2 Qxd2+ 14.Kxd2 a6 15.Rhc1 and White has a strategically won game.

Nor is the preparation for fianchettoing Black's light-square bishop fully successful: 8…h6 9.Bh4 dxc4 10.Bxc4 b5 11.Bd3 a6 12.0-0 c5 13.a4! (this forces a weakening of Black's queenside pawns) 13…c4 14.Bb1 Nd5 15.Bxe7 Qxe7 16.b3! and Black ends up with a weak pawn on the queenside.

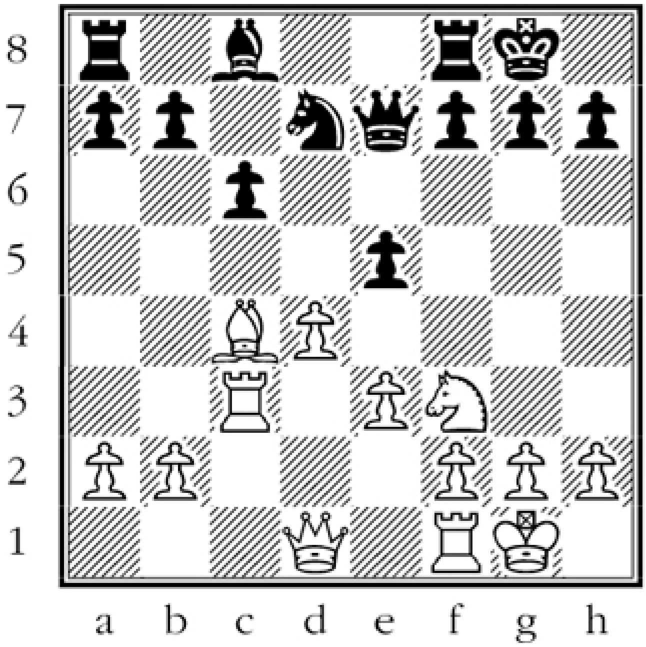
8…dxc4 9.Bxc4 Nd5

Black has surrendered the center in order to free his constricted position by several exchanges – and also in the hope of freeing his imprisoned bishop.

10.Bxe7 Qxe7 11.0-0

White can avoid the exchange of knights with 11.Ne4, but after 11…N5f6 12.Ng3 e5! (freedom for the bishop!) Black stands well enough.

11…Nxc3 12.Rxc3 e5 (D)



8

Position after 12…e5

At last Black has made the liberating move …e5, which means that the development of his bishop is assured.

In the event of 13.dxe5 Nxe5 14.Nxe5 Qxe5 15.f4 Black can hold his own with 15…Qe4! 16.Bb3 Bf5 17.Qh5 g6 18.Qh6 Rad8 etc.

13.Qb1!

With this move White continues to maintain some advantage in space. If now 13…e4 14.Nd2 Nf6 15.b4! a6 16.Rfc1 Bg4 17.a4 and White has strong play on the c-file with the coming b4-b5 etc.

Probably best for Black is 13…exd4 14.exd4 Nb6 15.Bb3 Qf6 16.Re1 Be6 17.Bxe6 fxe6 18.Rce3 Rae8. *White still has more space for his pieces, but Black has completed his development and has a strong point for his knight at d5.*

(b) Exchange Variation

Queen’s Gambit Declined

White – Black

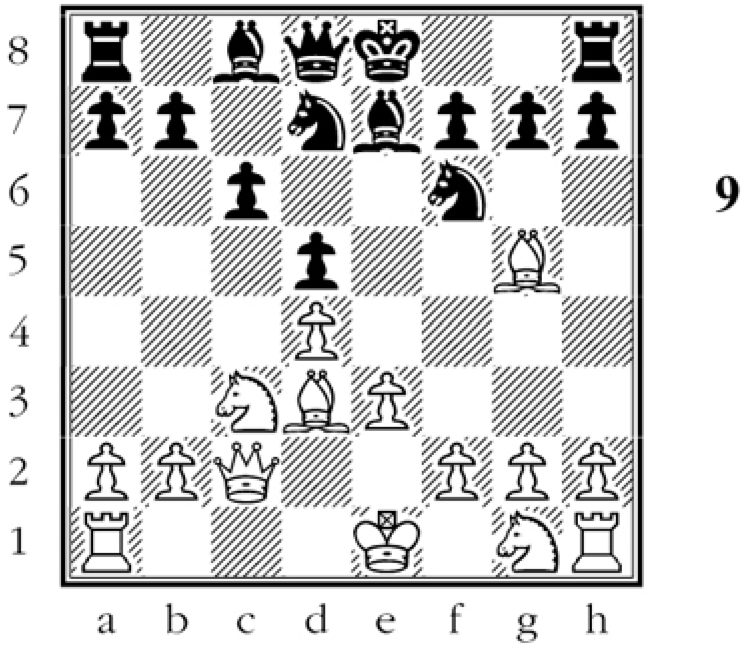
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 c6 6.cxd5 exd5

It will become clear later on that White is pursuing a definite policy with this exchange of pawns, despite the fact that the swap allows Black to open the diagonal for his light-square bishop.

7.Bd3 Be7

Planning to free his game with 8…Ne4!.

8.Qc2! (D)



Position after 8.Qc2!

White’s last move has prevented 8…Ne4? which would now be answered by 9.Bxe7 winning a pawn. So Black must find some other way to free himself.

White plans to play Rb1 in due course, followed by b2-b4-b5. If Black then exchanges pawns (…cxb5) he is left with a weak d-pawn and b-pawn; aside from that, White has the mastery of the open c-file.

On the other hand, if Black stands pat against the “minority attack” and allows White to play bxc6, then Black is left with a backward c-pawn on the open c-file. Such a pawn remains a lasting weakness right into the endgame stage.

Here are some typical possibilities: 8…Nh5 9.Bxe7 Qxe7 10.Nge2 g6 11.0-0 f5 12.Rab1 0-0 13.b4! a6 14.a4 f4! (counterplay on the kingside) 15.Nxf4 Nxf4 16.exf4 Rxf4 17.Ne2 Rf6 18.b5 axb5 19.axb5 Nf8 20.bxc6 bxc6 Black is left with the backward c-pawn. Or 8…Nf8 9.Nf3 Ne6 10.Bh4 g6 11.0-0 0-0 12.Rab1 Ng7 13.b4! Bf5 (getting rid of the problem child) 14.b5 Bxd3 15.Qxd3 Nf5 16.bxc6 Nxh4 17.Nxh4 bxc6. Again Black is left with the backward c-pawn.

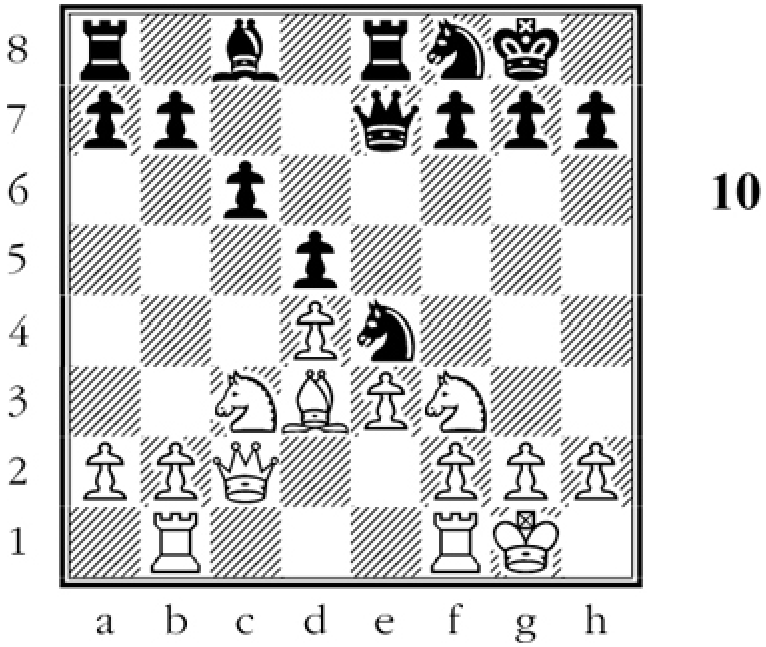
8…0-0 9.Nf3 Re8 10.0-0 Nf8

Now it is still too soon for 10…Ne4? for then 11.Bxe4! wins a pawn (Black's h-pawn is unprotected.)

11.Rab1 Ne4 12.Bxe7

If now 12.Bxe4 Bxg5 and Black is safe.

12…Qxe7 (D)



Position after 12…Qxe7

Again White is in position to carry out the minority attack: 13.b4! a6 14.a4 Nxc3 15.Qxc3 followed eventually by b4-b5 with a strong initiative.

(c) Cambridge Springs Defense

Queen’s Gambit Declined

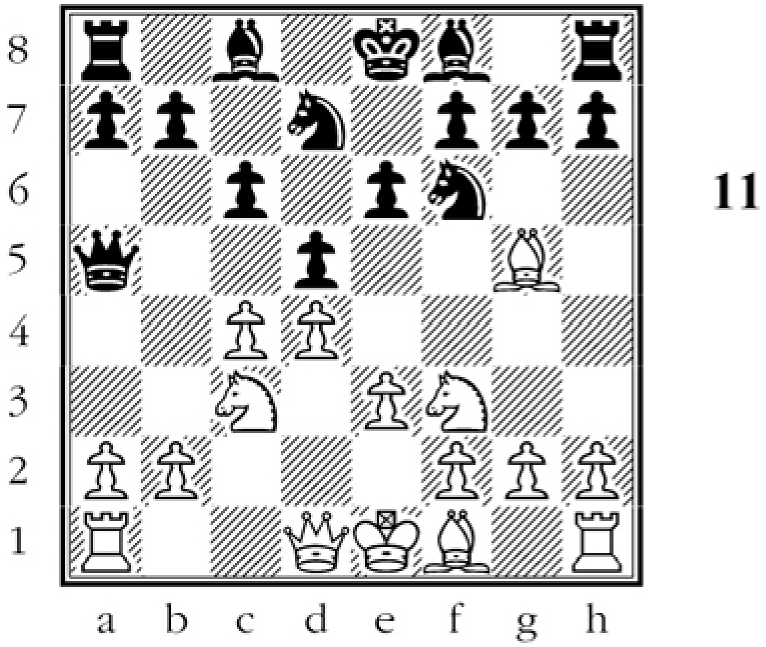
White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7

A good alternative is 4…Bb4, with ideas akin to those of the Nimzo-Indian Defense (page 268).

After 4…Nbd7 White can, if he wishes, transpose into the Exchange Variation with 5.cxd5 or 6.cxd5.

5.e3 c6 6.Nf3 Qa5 (D)



Position after 6…Qa5

With his last move Black pins White’s queen knight, exploiting the absence of White’s dark-square bishop. Note that 7.cxd5 is not so good now, as Black has 7…Nxd5, intensifying the pin.

7.Nd2

Taking measures against the pin. Black can now get equality with 7…Bb4 8.Qc2 dxc4 (attacking White’s bishop) 9.Bxf6 Nxf6 10.Nxc4 Bxc3+ 11.Qxc3 Qxc3+ 12.bxc3 Ke7 13.f3 Bd7 14.Rb1 b6 15.Ne5 Rhc8 followed by …c5. However, the main line is even simpler and more promising.

7…dxc4 8.Bxf6 Nxf6 9.Nxc4 Qc7 10.Rc1 Nd5! 11.Bd3 Nxc3 12.bxc3

Not 12.Rxc3? Bb4, winning the exchange.

12…Be7 13.0-0 0-0 14.f4 g6 15.Ne5 c5

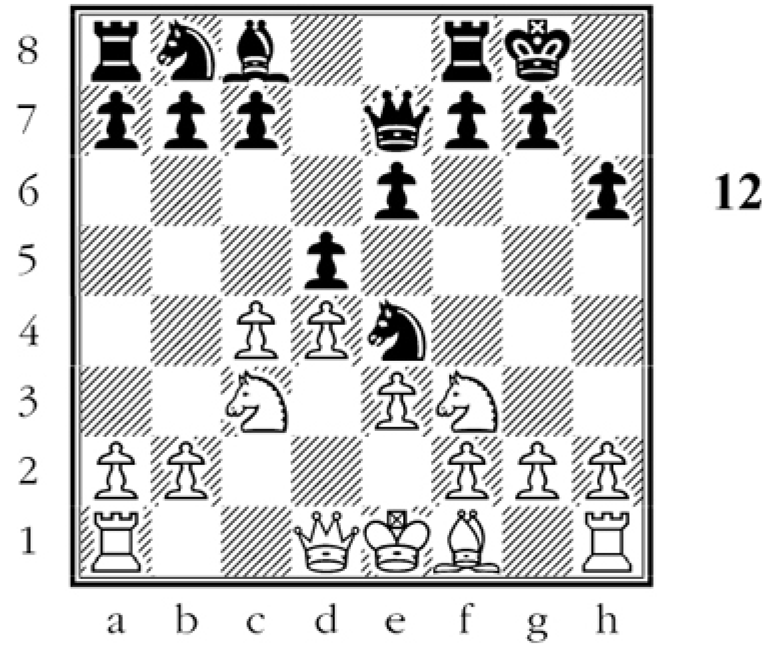
The position is approximately even. White has a freer game, but Black's bishop pair has great potential power.

(d) Lasker's Defense

Queen's Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e3 0-0 6.Nf3 h6 7.Bh4 Ne4! 8.Bxe7 Qxe7 (D)



Position after 8…Qxe7

Black's emphasis is on exchanging and simplifying so as to liberate his remaining forces.

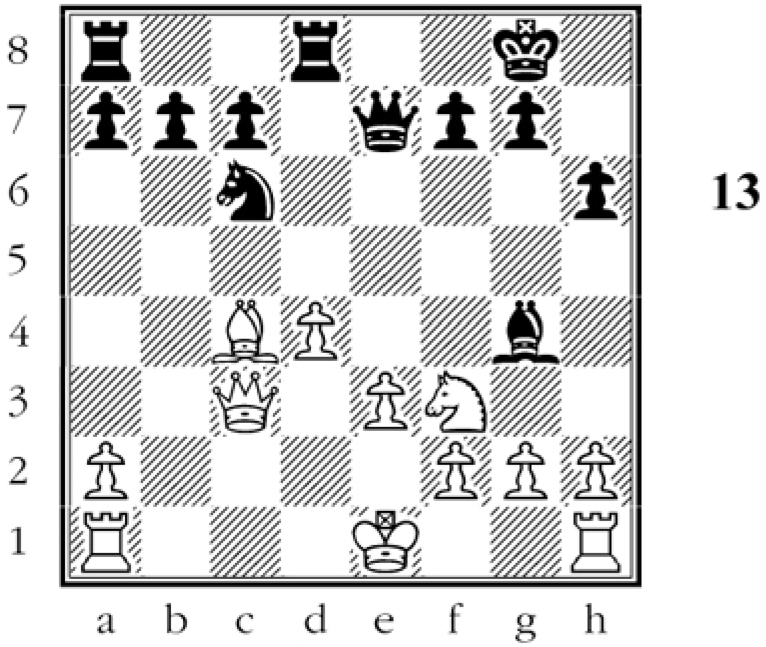
Black has already achieved a satisfactory position, for example 9.Nxe4 dxe4 10.Nd2 e5!. Then if 11.Nxe4? exd4 12.Qxd4?? Rd8 and Black wins a piece.

Or if 9.Qc2 Nxc3 10.Qxc3 dxc4! 11.Bxc4 b6! 12.0-0 Bb7 13.Be2 Rc8! 14.Rfd1 c5! and Black stands well.

9.cxd5 Nxc3 10.bxc3 exd5

Black's bishop is liberated at last.

11.Qb3 Rd8 12.c4 dxc4 13.Bxc4 Nc6 14.Qc3 Bg4 (D)



Position after 14…Bg4

Black's bishop has developed with a threat of 15…Bxf3 16.gxf3 Nxd4 (or 16…Rxd4).

15.0-0 Bxf3 16.gxf3 Qf6

Black has a thoroughly satisfactory position. All his pieces are in good play.

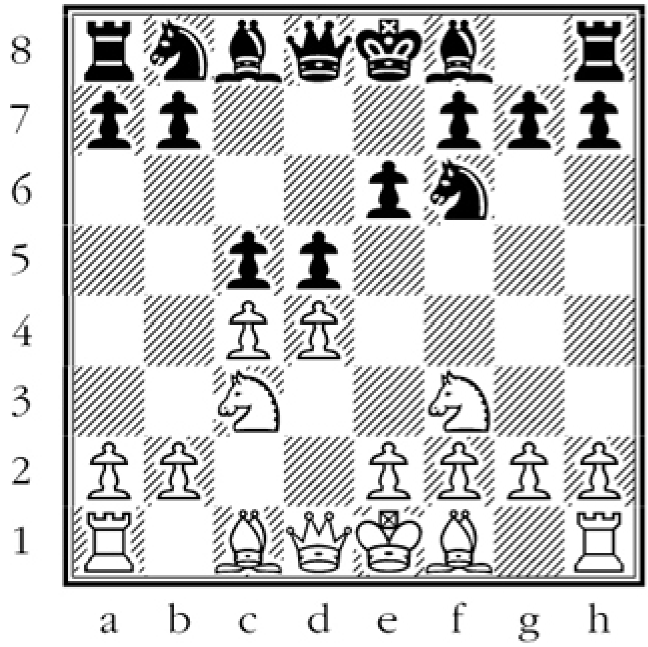
(e) Semi-Tarrasch Defense

Queen's Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Nf3 c5

Thanks to the fact that White's fourth move here is less energetic than 4.Bg5, Black can hit back vigorously in the center. (D)



14

Position after 4…c5

If now 5.Bg5 cxd4 6.Nxd4 e5 7.Nf3 d4 8.Nd5 Be7 9.Nxe7 Qxe7 with a good game for Black.

5.cxd5 Nxd5!

After 5…exd5 Black would be faced with the later possibility of dxc5, leaving him with an isolated d-pawn as in Variation (h).

6.e4 Nxc3 7.bxc3 cxd4 8.cxd4 Bb4+ 9.Bd2 Bxd2+

As in the previous variation, Black frees his game by exchanging pieces.

10.Qxd2 0-0 11.Bc4 Nc6 12.0-0 b6 13.Rfd1 Bb7

Black has developed his light-square bishop satisfactorily. After 14.Qf4 Rc8 he has a good game. White has a powerful-looking pawn center, but Black has the queenside majority of pawns. Both sides have good prospects for the middlegame.

(f) Duras Variation

Queen’s Gambit Declined

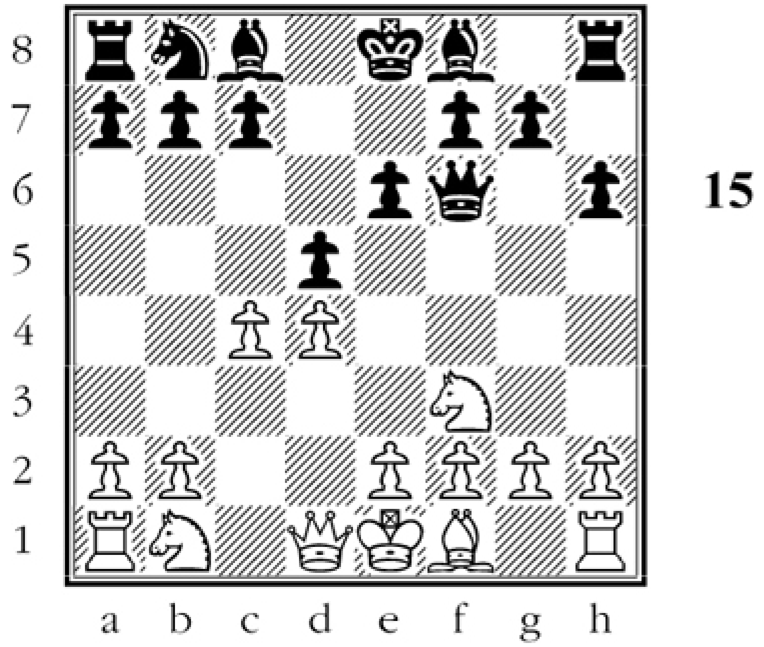
White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Bg5 h6!

This takes advantage of the fact that White’s third move is not quite so strong as 3.Nc3.White’s next move is practically forced, for if 5.Bh4 Bb4+! 6.Nc3 dxc4! and Black can hold the gambit pawn in all variations.

Proof: if 7.e4? g5!, winning White’s e-pawn (this is the point of 4…h6!. If 7.e3 b5! (this is the point of 5…Bb4+!). Finally, if 7.Qa4+ Nc6 8.a3 Bxc3+ 9.bxc3 Qd5! 10.e3 b5 and again Black keeps the pawn.

5.Bxf6 Qxf6 (D)



Position after 5…Qxf6

Black has the positional advantage of the two bishops against bishop and knight; but his position is somewhat constricted.

6.Qb3 c6 7.Nbd2 Nd7 8.e4 dxe4 9.Nxe4 Qf4 10.Bd3 Nf6 11.Nxf6+ Qxf6 12.0-0 Bd6 13.Rfe1 0-0

Equal game. White has a freer position, but Black’s forces have considerable power, especially if he can free his light-square bishop.

(g) Vienna Variation

Queen’s Gambit Declined

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4+ 5.Nc3 dxc4 6.e4 c5

This counter-thrust in the center leads to very exciting play. Here again Black has taken advantage of the fact that 3.Nf3 is less energetic than 3.Nc3.

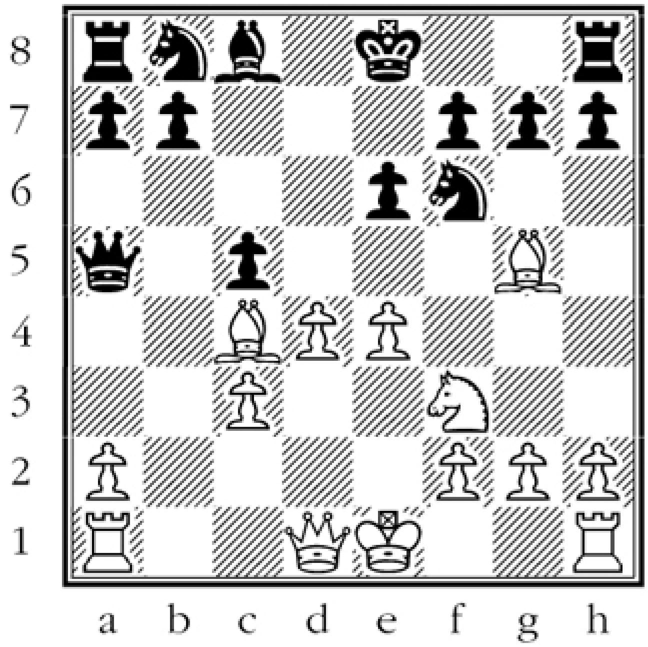
An extremely complicated game can now arise from 7.e5, but it appears that Black can hold his own, for example 7…cxd4 8.exf6 gxf6 9.Qa4+ Nc6

10.0-0-0 fxg5 11.Nxd4 Bxc3! 12.bxc3 Bd7! 13.Nxc6 Qc7! etc. Or 8.Qa4+ Nc6 9.0-0-0 Bd7! 10.Ne4 Be7 11.exf6 gxf6 12.Bh4 Rc8! 13.Kb1 Na5 14.Qc2 e5! and Black has compensation for the piece down. (His pawns are powerful.)

7.Bxc4

Black can now play 7…cxd4 8.Nxd4 Bxc3+ 9.bxc3 Nbd7 with a perfectly safe game. However, 8…Qa5 seems much too risky: 9.Bxf6! Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 Qxc3+ 11.Kf1 Qxc4+ 12.Kg1 Nd7 (not 12…gxf6? 13.Rc1 winning) 13.Rc1! Qa6 14.Bxg7 and White has a terrific initiative.

7…Bxc3+! 8.bxc3 Qa5! (D)



16

Position after 8…Qa5!

Black must win a pawn, for example 9.Qc2 (or 9.Qb3) 9…Nxe4! etc. Or 9.Bxf6 Qxc3+ 10.Nd2 gxf6 11.dxc5 Nd7 etc.

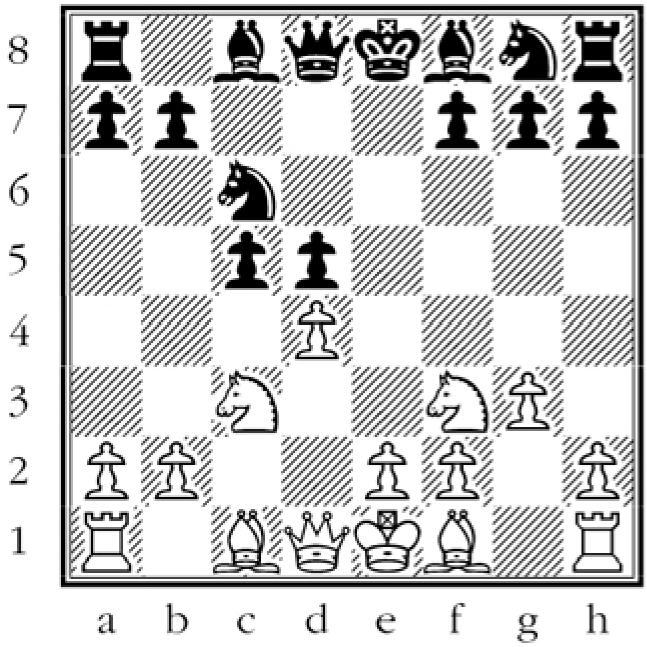
This line of play is unsatisfactory for White, as Black wins material.

(h) Tarrasch Defense
Queen’s Gambit Declined
White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 c5 4.cxd5! exd5

White intends to burden Black with an isolated d-pawn (see White's ninth move).

5.Nf3 Nc6 6.g3! (D)



Position after 6.g3!

White will fianchetto his light-square bishop in order to exert powerful pressure on Black's weak d-pawn.

6…Nf6 7.Bg2 Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.dxc5!

This is the move that sets off White's advantage. The counter gambit 9…d4 simply leaves Black a pawn down after 10.Na4 Bf5 11.Bf4 Ne4 12.b4! Bf6 13.b5 Ne7 14.Be5.

9…Bxc5 10.Na4 Be7 11.Be3 Ne4 12.Rc1

White has a marked positional advantage, thanks to Black's isolated d-pawn.

Summary: After 3.Nc3, Black's most promising defenses appear to be the Cambridge Springs Defense and Lasker's Defense. After 3.Nf3, Black does well with the Semi-Tarrasch Variation, the Duras Variation or Vienna Variation.

Queen's Gambit Declined Slav Defense (2…c6)

By propping up his d-pawn with 2…c6 Black takes up the fight for the center in the same way as when playing 2…e6. However, 2…c6 does not block his light-square bishop and, as we would expect, we often see the black bishop developed to f5 (or even to g4) in this line of play.

After 2…c6 Black frequently accepts the gambit on move 4, on the theory that he can fight for the center by playing his light-square bishop to f5. White generally gets the better of it, however, by angling for e2-e4, or trying to control the center in some other fashion.

Despite the early …c6, Black will generally try to free his game in the late opening or early middlegame by playing …c5.

The so-called “Semi-Slav” defenses involve Black’s playing …e6 after …c6. As this hems in his light-square bishop, he will generally try to fianchetto his problem child.

(a) Deferred Acceptance of the Gambit

Slav Defense

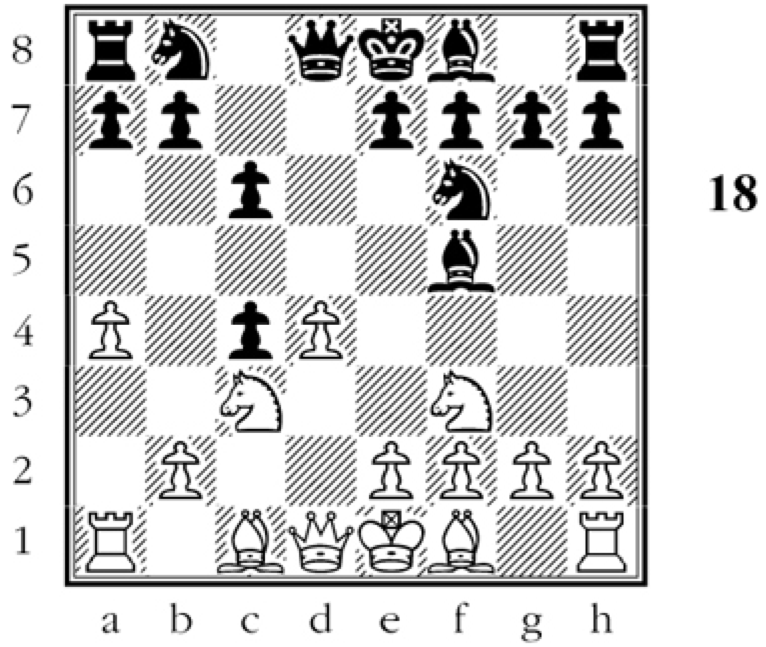
White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4

Here 4…Bf5 looks *logical*, but after 5.cxd5! cxd5 6.Qb3! Black is in trouble because of the twofold attack on his b- and d-pawns.

After 4…dxc4 White can play to recover the gambit pawn directly by 5.e3 b5 6.a4 b4 (if 6…a6 7.axb5 cxb5 8.Nxb5 etc.) 7.Na2 e6 8.Bxc4 etc. But as this leaves his queen knight out of the game, White chooses a different way.

5.a4 Bf5 (D)



Position after 5…Bf5

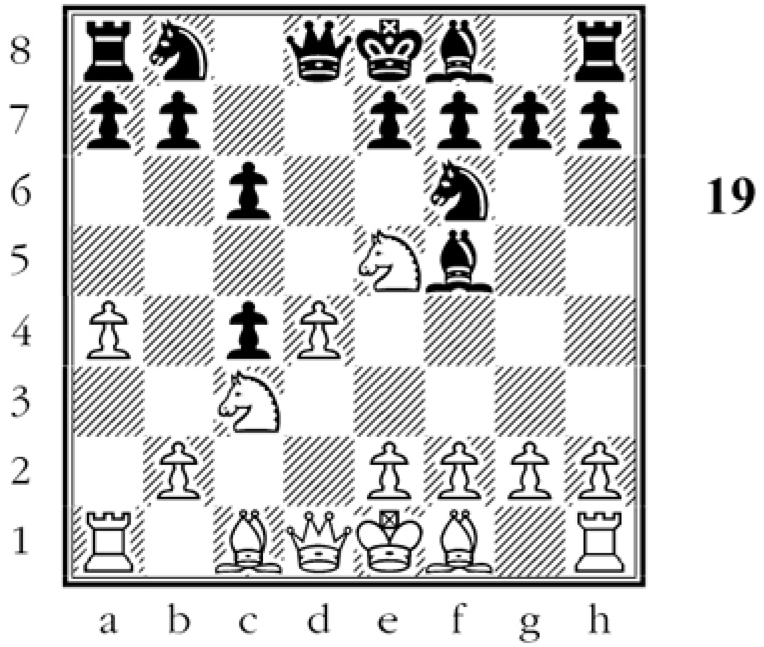
Black has achieved his heart’s desire – development of the light-square bishop.

6.Ne5

The alternative is 6.e3 e6 7.Bxc4 Bb4 (to restrain an eventual e3-e4) 8.0-0 0-0 9.Qe2. Now Black can try to stop e3-e4 or accept it as inevitable.

Thus 9…Ne4 10.Bd3! (an interesting pawn sacrifice) 10…Bxc3 (if 10…Nxc3 11.bxc3 Bxc3 12.Rb1 and White regains the pawn) 11.bxc3! Nxc3 12.Qc2 Bxd3 13.Qxd3 Nd5 14.Ba3 with a magnificent development in return for the pawn.

Or 9…Bg4 10.h3 Bxf3 11.Qxf3 Nbd7 12.Rd1 (not 12.e4 at once because of 12…Nb6) 12…e5! 13.d5! (if 13.dxe5 Nxe5) 13…Bxc3! 14.dxc6! e4! 15.Qf5 Be5! 16.cxd7 Qc7! and Black can just about hold his own. (D)



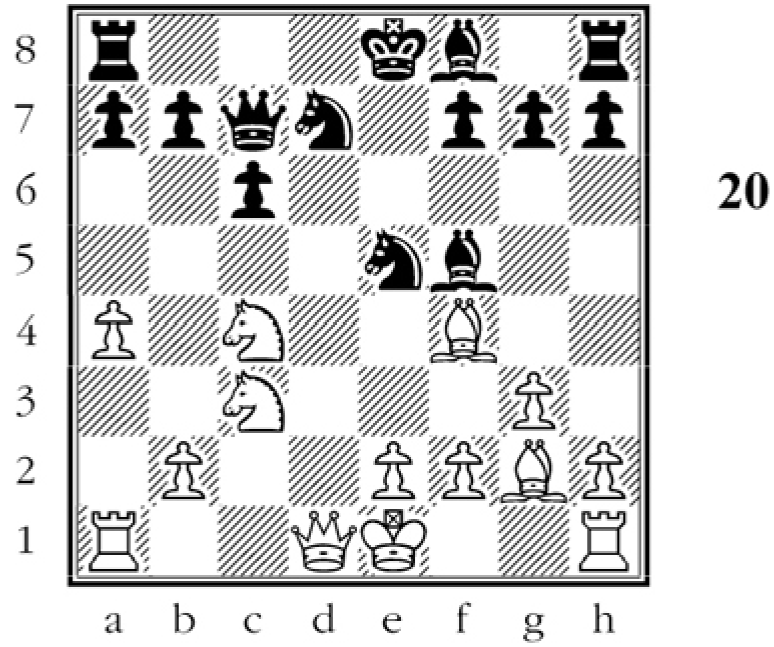
Position after 6.Ne5

White intends to fianchetto his light-square bishop. He will recover the gambit pawn by capturing it with his king knight.

6…Nbd7

Here 6…e6 looks plausible, but after 7.f3! Black’s light-square bishop can run into trouble, for example 7…Bb4 8.Nxc4 0-0 9.Bg5! c5 10.dxc5 Qxd1+ 11.Kxd1 Bxc5 12.e4! Bg6 13.Ne5. White will play Nxg6, obtaining the positional advantage of two bishops against bishop and knight.

7.Nxc4 Qc7 8.g3! e5 9.dxe5 Nxe5 10.Bf4 Nfd7 11.Bg2 (D)



Position after 11.Bg2

Black has developed freely and rapidly, but the pin on his king knight promises to be troublesome.

11…f6 12.0-0 Rd8 13.Qc1! Be6 14.Ne4!

The point is that after 14…Bxc4 15.Qxc4 Nxc4 16.Bxc7 White has a very favorable endgame with his two bishops against bishop and knight.

14…Bb4 15.a5!

White has a very strong position. If now 15…Bxc4 16.Qxc4 Bxa5?? 17.Qe6+ Kf8 18.Rfd1! and White's pressure must be decisive. Or 15…0-0 16.Nxe5 Nxe5 17.Nc5 with powerful pressure.

(b) Semi-Slav: Classical Variation

Semi-Slav Defense

White – Black

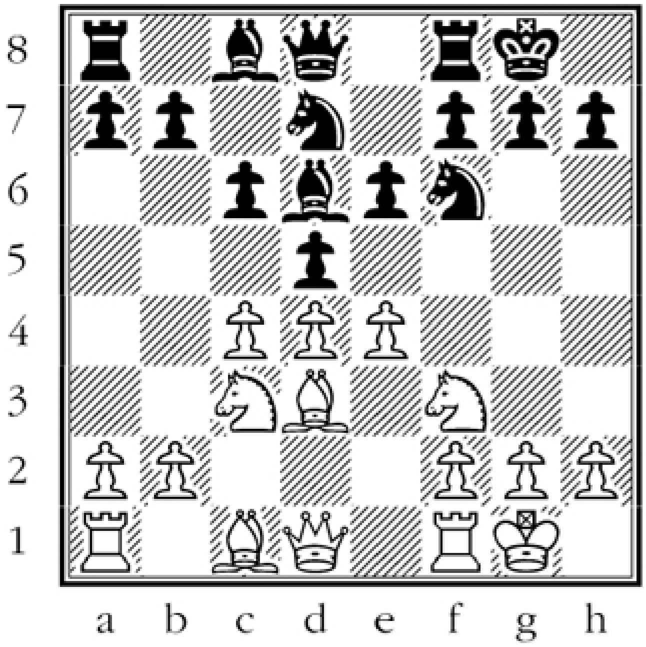
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.e3 Nbd7

Against the "stonewall" setup of 5…Ne4 6.Bd3 f5 White has the vigorous 7.g4!!.

6.Bd3 Bd6

The conservative 6…Be7 allows White to play 7.0-0 0-0 8.b3! b6 9.Bb2 with a strong white initiative because his light-square bishop's aggressive position contrasts favorably with the passive position of Black's dark-square bishop.

7.0-0 0-0 8.e4! (D)



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Position after 8.e4!

White opens up the game advantageously, for if 8…dxc4 9.Bxc4 e5 10.Bg5! with a more aggressive development.

8…dxe4 9.Nxe4 Nxe4 10.Bxe4 Nf6

Not 10…e5? 11.dxe5 Nxe5 12.Nxe5 Bxe5 13.Bxh7+! Kxh7 14.Qh5+ winning a pawn.

11.Bc2

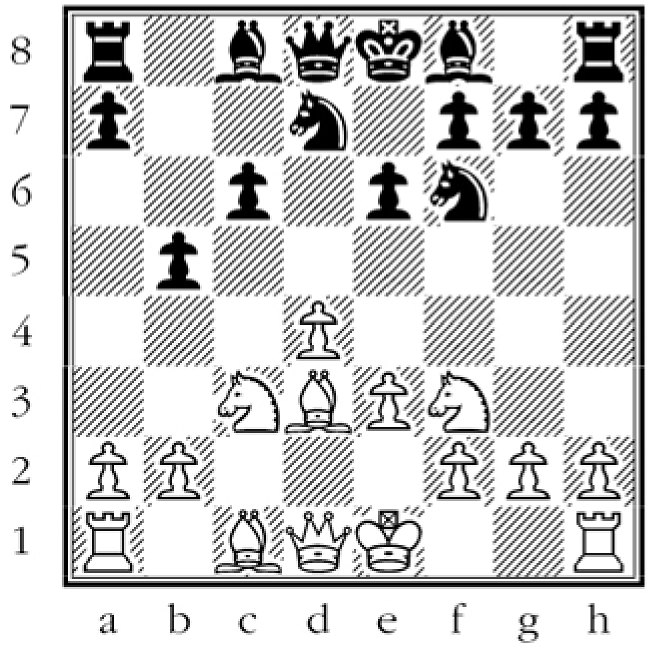
White has distinctly the freer game. Note that Black's light-square bishop is still hemmed in.

(c) Semi-Slav: Meran Variation

Semi-Slav Defense

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Bd3 dxc4 7.Bxc4 b5 8.Bd3 (D)



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Position after 8.Bd3

Black can avoid the intricacies of the following play by continuing 8…Bb7 9.e4 b4! 10.Na4 c5 11.e5 Nd5 etc.

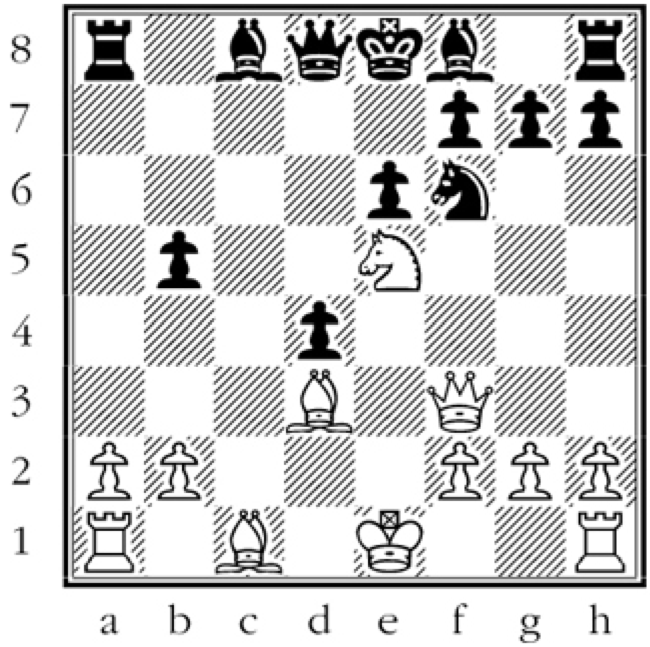
8…a6 9.e4

After the colorless 9.0-0 c5 10.a4 b4 11.Ne4 Bb7 Black has an easy game (generally true when he succeeds in developing the light-square bishop).

9…c5! 10.e5 cxd4! 11.Nxb5! Nxe5!

If instead 11…axb5 12.exf6 Qb6 13.fxg7 Bxg7 14.0-0 Bb7 15.Bf4 0-0 and Black’s king is somewhat exposed because of the missing g-pawn.

12.Nxe5 axb5 13.Qf3 (D)



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Position after 13.Qf3

To all appearances Black is in serious trouble, but he has ingenious resources.

13…Bb4+! 14.Ke2 Rb8

Calmly ignoring 15.Nc6, which he can answer with 15…Bb7.

15.Qg3 Qd6! 16.Nf3 Qxg3 17.hxg3 Bd6 18.Nxd4 Bd7

White has regained his pawn, and the position is even. However, this variation is too complicated and dangerous for the average player.

(d) Semi-Slav: Anti-Meran Gambit

Semi-Slav Defense

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6

After 3…e6 White can calmly protect the gambit pawn with 4.e3 – or he can go in for the complex alternative 4.Nc3!? dxc4 5.e3 b5 6.a4 Bb4 7.Bd2 a5 8.axb5 Bxc3 9.Bxc3 cxb5 10.b3! Bb7! 11.bxc4 b4 12.Bb2 Nf6 and White's powerful center is more or less balanced by Black's bristling queenside passed pawns.

4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5!?

Avoiding the Meran Variation which could arise after 5.e3 Nbd7 6.Bd3 dxc4 7.Bxc4 b5 etc. **5…dxc4!?**

Leading to dangerous complications, whereas the sedate alternative 5…Nbd7 would transpose to quieter lines like the Cambridge Springs Defense, Orthodox Defense, or Exchange Variation. After Black's last, 6.e3 is too slow because of 6…b5. Therefore:

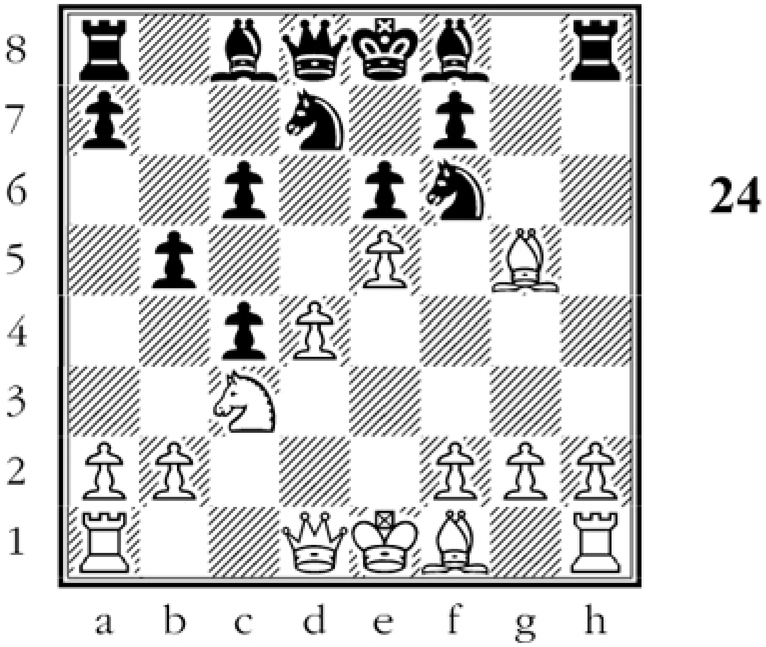
6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6

This and Black's next move are forced.

8.Bh4 g5 9.Nxg5! hxg5

If 9…Nd5 10.Nxf7! Qxh4 11.Nxh8 etc.

10.Bxg5 Nbd7 (D)



Position after 10…Nbd7

Though Black is temporarily a pawn down and must lose back the extra piece, he has excellent prospects. Thus, if 11.Qf3 Bb7 12.Be2 Qb6! 13.exf6 c5! with a splendid position.

11.g3 Qa5

A good alternative is 11…Bb7 12.Bg2 Qb6 13.exf6 c5! 14.dxc5 Bxc5 15.0-0 0-0-0.

12.exf6 b4 13.Ne4 Ba6!

An exciting position in which both sides have weaknesses and attacking possibilities.

(e) …Bf5 Variation

Slav Defense

White – Black

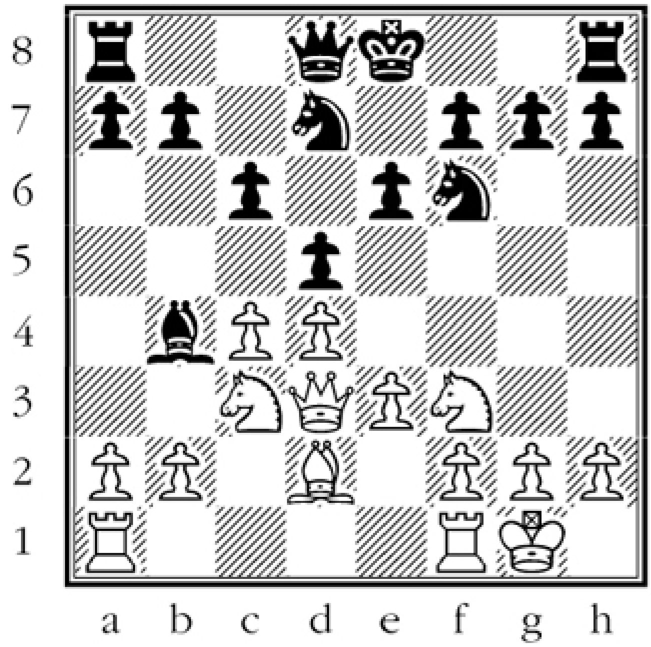
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 Bf5

Thus Black avoids the intricacies of the Meran Variation and develops his problem bishop. But White manages to maintain the initiative.

5.Bd3 Bxd3 6.Qxd3 e6 7.Nc3 Nbd7 8.0-0 Bb4

Hoping – in vain – to stop e3-e4. If instead 8…Bd6 9.e4 with greater freedom of action for White.

9.Bd2! (D)



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Position after 9.Bd2!

White has set a trap! If Black castles now, then 10.Nxd5! wins a pawn.

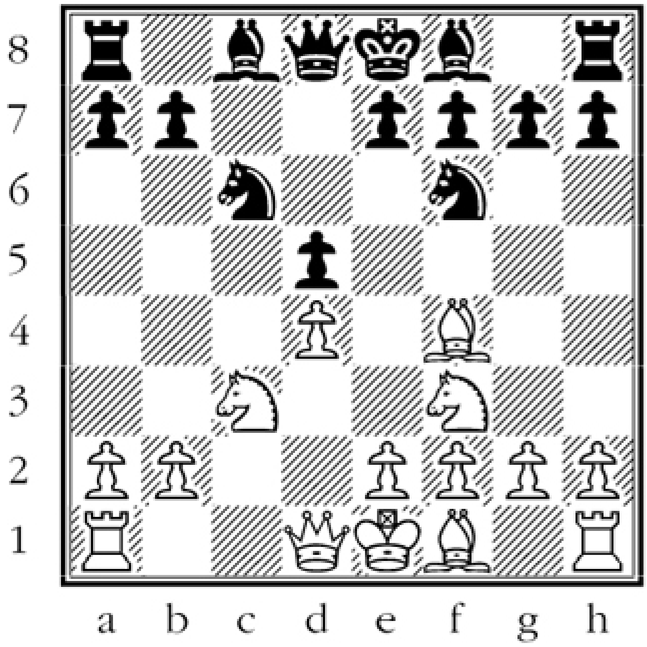
9…Ba5 10.b4! Bc7

Not 10…Bxb4 11.Nxd5! Nxd5 12.cxd5 Bxd2 13.dxc6! bxc6 14.Nxd2 and White has a substantial positional advantage.

11.e4 dxc4 12.Qxc4

White has a noticeably freer game.

(f) Exchange Variation
Slav Defense
White – Black
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.cxd5 cxd5 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.Bf4 (D)



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Position after 6.Bf4

White's exchange at move 3 gives the variation its name. If now 6…e6 7.e3 Be7 and Black's conservative development has the drawback of blocking his light-square bishop's diagonal.

6…Bf5!

Black develops his problem bishop, although he sees difficulties ahead.

7.e3 e6 8.Qb3 Bb4!

So that if 9.Ne5 Qa5!, counterattacking vigorously.

9.Bb5 0-0!

Black is not afraid of 10.Bxc6 for then 10…Bxc3+ 11.Qxc3 Rc8! is strong (12.Qa3 Rxc6 13.Qxa7 Bd3!).

10.0-0 Bxc3 11.Bxc6 Bxb2 12.Bxb7 Bxa1 13.Rxa1

White must regain the exchange, with a perfectly even position resulting.

Summary: Black's best practical chances seem to arise from the Meran and Anti-Meran lines in the Semi-Slav form. The deferred acceptance of the gambit is less suitable for Black because it leaves White with too much freedom of action.

Albin Counter-Gambit

Like all gambits played by Black, this one must be viewed with suspicion. Black gives up a pawn very early in the hope of gaining time for rapid development. White's cue is to develop quickly without attaching too much importance to the extra pawn. The result is either that White keeps the extra pawn and the initiative to boot, or else that he returns the pawn and maintains powerful pressure.

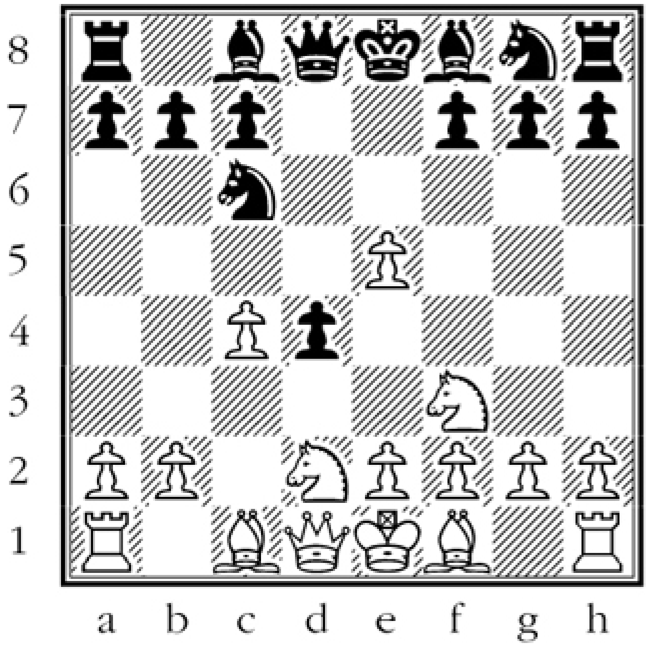
Albin Counter Gambit
White – Black
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5?!

Rarely does Black have the opportunity to indulge in such violent play. This is good policy only against a definitely weaker opponent.

3.dxe5 d4

The gambit is in operation. Black hopes that his advanced d-pawn will prove a stumbling block for White's development. More often than not, it becomes a target for White's pieces.

4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Nbd2 (D)



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Position after 5.Nbd2

In practically all variations White fianchettoes his light-square bishop. This completes the mobilization of his kingside and gives the bishop a powerful diagonal.

5…Be6

After 5…f6 6.exf6 Nxf6 (or 6…Qxf6) Black has inadequate compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

On 5…Bb4 White has no objection to returning the extra pawn, thus: 6.a3! Bxd2+ 7.Qxd2! Bg4 8.b4! Bxf3 9.exf3 Nxe5 for after 10.Bb2 Qe7 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12.f4 White has a marked positional advantage – two bishops against two knights. Against 5…Bg4 White proceeds favorably with 6.g3 etc.

6.g3 Qd7 7.Bg2 Rd8

Black can also castle at this point, but this leaves his king exposed to a withering attack on the White light-square bishop’s long diagonal.

8.0-0 Nge7 9.Qa4 Ng6

Black hopes to win the advanced e-pawn – but this would cost him his queenside pawns – thanks to the powerful action of White’s pieces.

10.a3! Be7 11.b4 0-0

White continues 12.Bb2 with a very powerful position. Black cannot recover his pawn, and his position has no appeal in other respects.

Queen's Gambit Accepted

In order to evade the difficult problems which confront the defender in the Queen's Gambit Declined, some players prefer to accept the gambit by answering 2.c4 with 2…dxc4. This clears the long diagonal which extends out from a8, and Black hopes to fianchetto his light-square bishop to exploit this long diagonal.

Theoretically, this is an excellent notion – but there are drawbacks. Black's immediate surrender of the center gives White more space, quicker development, and the makings of a powerful pawn center.

Black may try a different approach after 2…dxc4 by developing his light-square bishop to g4. Aggressive though this seems, White knows how to hit back hard. Thus the acceptance of the gambit involves Black in thorny problems.

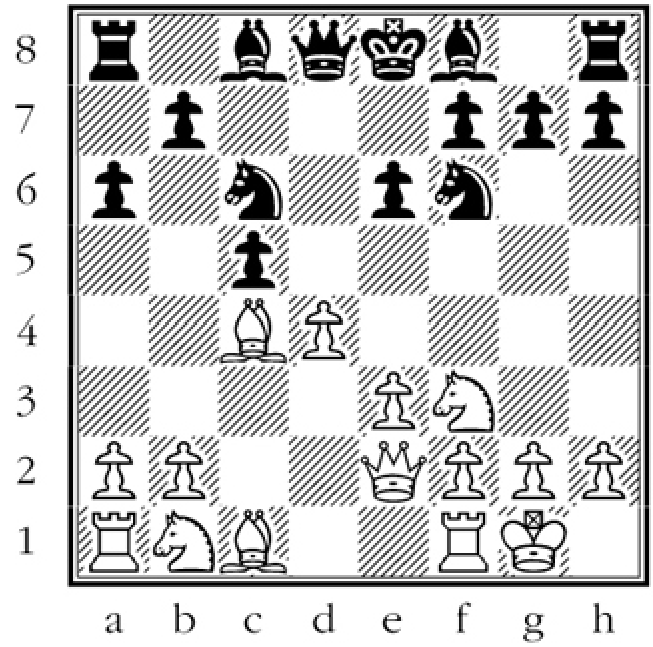
(a) 4…e6 Variation
Queen's Gambit Accepted
White – Black
1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.e3 e6

It is instructive to observe that it would be futile for Black to try to hold on to the gambit pawn. Thus, if 4…b5 5.a4! c6 6.b3!. No matter how Black plays, he loses back the pawn and remains with a weakened queenside pawn structure.

5.Bxc4 c5

An important counter-thrust. By engaging the d-pawn at once, Black takes much of the sting out of an eventual e3-e4 by White.

6.0-0 a6 7.Qe2 Nc6 (D)



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Position after 7…Nc6

White has two advantageous ways to proceed: 8.dxc5! in order to fianchetto his dark-square bishop on a powerful diagonal; or 8.Rd1! in order to operate on the center files with his rooks.

Proceeding with inexorable logic, White can get a clear-cut positional advantage with 8.dxc5! Bxc5 9.a3! b5 10.Ba2 Bb7 11.b4 Be7 12.Bb2 0-0 13.Nbd2!. The point of White's play is clearly revealed in his last move: his queen knight can occupy the c5-square. As for Black, his queen knight, being developed differently, cannot imitate this convincing maneuver.

There follows: 13…Qb6 14.Nb3 Rfd8 15.Rac1 Rac8 16.Nc5 with a distinctly superior position for White.

8.Rd1 b5

In order to answer 9.Bd3 or 9.Bb3 with 9…c4! 10.Bc2 Nb4! and …Nxc2 assuring Black the positional advantage of two bishops against bishop and knight.

9.dxc5 Qc7 10.Bd3 Bxc5

Not 10…Nb4 11.a4! Nxd3 12.Qxd3 b4 13.c6! with a stranglehold on Black’s game, as he cannot play 13…Qxc6?? because of 14.Qd8#.

11.a4! b4

The alternative 11…bxa4 12.Rxa4 Nb4 is not appealing because of 13.Bb5+! Bd7 14.Bxd7+ Nxd7 15.Bd2 etc.

12.Nbd2 0-0 13.Nb3 Be7

White now plays 14.e4 followed by Bg5 and Rac1 leaving Black with a cramped, difficult game.

(b) 4…Bg4 Variation

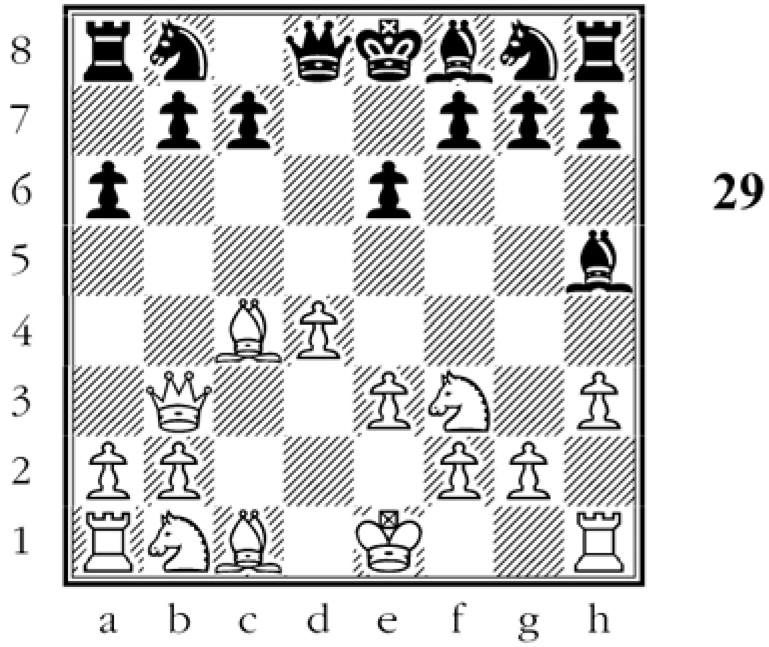
Queen’s Gambit Accepted

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.Nf3 a6 4.e3 Bg4

As we have already seen, it would be pointless for Black to play 4…b5 because of 5.a4 c6 6.b3! etc. Instead, he develops his light-square bishop, pinning White’s king knight.

5.h3 Bh5 6.Bxc4 e6 7.Qb3! (D)



Position after 7.Qb3!

Protecting the b-pawn poses an awkward problem for Black, as neither 7…Qc8 nor 7…Ra7 looks inviting.

7…Bxf3 8.gxf3 b5 9.Be2 c5 10.a4 b4 11.dxc5 Bxc5

White has two bishops against bishop and knight, and he can make good use of the open g-file. In addition, Black's queenside pawn structure has been weakened. The position definitely favors White.

Miscellaneous Double d-pawn Openings

There are openings in which White plays 1.d4 and Black replies 1…d5, whereupon White deliberately avoids playing the Queen's Gambit. The result is an absence of tension in the central pawn position. This lack of tension makes it easy for Black to achieve equality.

(a) Colle System

Colle System

White – Black

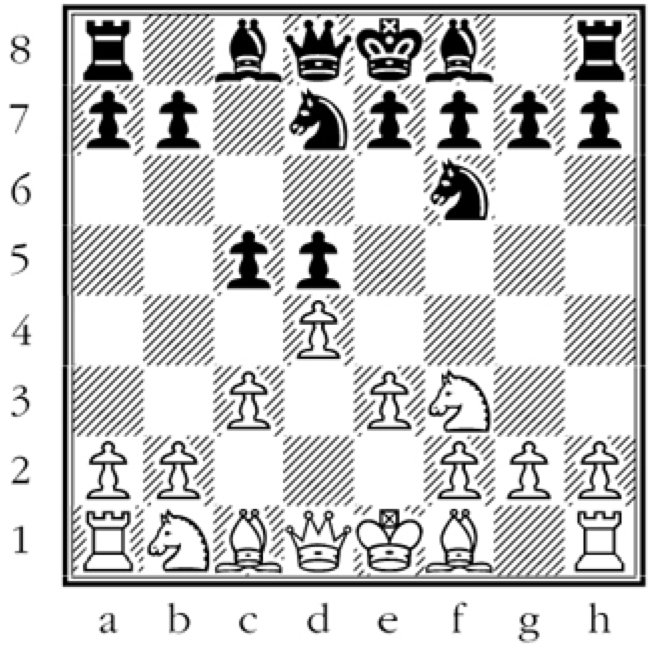
1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.e3 c5 4.c3

The characteristic move of this system. White's idea is to support his d-pawn with a view to an eventual e3-e4. This often gives him the initiative in the center. In turn such a preponderance, if met by indifferent moves, may lead to a powerful attack by White.

The alternative 4.b3 has gone out of style because of the continuation 4…e6 5.Bb2 Nc6 6.Bd3 Bd6 7.0-0 0-0. Now if 8.Nbd2 Qe7! 9.Ne5 (else Black frees himself at once with …e5) 9…cxd4 10.exd4 Ba3 with an excellent game for Black. This applies also to 8.a3 Qc7 followed by …e5.

4…Nbd7!

An important finesse. After 4…e6 5.Nbd2 Nc6 6.Bd3 Bd6 7.0-0 0-0 8.dxc5! Bxc5 9.e4! White has the initiative in the center plus the queenside majority of pawns. These advantages have led to some very impressive White victories with the Colle System. (D)



Position after 4…Nbd7

If now 5.Nbd2 e6 6.Bd3 Bd6 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 cxd4! 9.cxd4 (not 9.Nxd4? Nc5!) 9…dxe4 10.Nxe4 and White is left with the positional disadvantage of an isolated d-pawn.

5.Nbd2 g6

As the last note indicates, 5…e6 is a perfectly suitable alternative. However, 5…g6 is even more promising, as it breaks the diagonal of White's light-square bishop and thereby crushes White's hopes of a kingside attack.

Note that Black's 5…g6 is made possible by his previous move, which guards his c-pawn and gives him freedom of action.

6.Bd3 Bg7 7.0-0 0-0

If now 8.e4 dxe4 9.Nxe4 cxd4 10.Nxd4 (not 10.cxd4?, leaving White with an isolated d-pawn) 10…Ne5 11.Nxf6+ Bxf6 12.Be2 Bd7 and Black has more freedom of action.

We arrive at the same conclusion after 8.b4 cxb4 9.cxb4 Ne8! 10.Bb2 Nd6 11.Qb3 Nb6 12.a4 Bf5! 13.Bxf5 gxf5! when White's remaining bishop is hemmed in by its own pawns.

(b) Stonewall Variation

Stonewall Variation

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.e3 Nf6 3.Bd3 c5 4.c3

White intends to continue with f2-f4, establishing the stonewall formation of his center pawns. The force of this is best seen after the passive 4…e6? 5.f4 Nbd7 6.Nf3 Bd6 7.Nbd2 b6 8.Ne5 Bb7 9.Qf3, leaving White with a very powerful position in the center that often leads to an overwhelming attack.

4…Nc6

Black intends to proceed along different lines. He does not mind the possibility of 5.dxc5, which gives him a tremendous pawn center after 5…e5. In any event, 5.dxc5 would be the negation of White's planned stonewall setup.

5.f4 Bg4!

Immediately solving the problem of the troublesome bishop.

6.Nf3 e6 7.Nbd2 Bd6 8.h3 Bh5 9.b3 cxd4 10.cxd4 Rc8 11.0-0 Bg6

Black has somewhat the better of it after 12.Bxg6 hxg6 as his remaining bishop has more freedom of action than the White bishop.

(c) 2.Bf4 Variation

2.Bf4 Variation

White – Black

1.d4 d5 2.Bf4

This old-fashioned move is discredited nowadays for two reasons. In the first place, White gives Black the initiative in the center by permitting him to play …c5. Secondly, White plays out his dark-square bishop before ascertaining what is the best square for that piece.

2…Nf6 3.Nf3 c5! 4.e3 Nc6 5.c3 Qb6

Black is developing very comfortably.

6.Qc1 Bf5 7.Nbd2 e6

It is clear that White has frittered away the initiative. Black has a very promising game.

Nimzo-Indian Defense

In the “Indian” defenses Black answers 1.d4 with 1…Nf6. Momentarily, then, Black is trying to control the center by the knight move (rather than the orthodox 1…d5). Later on, Black may intensify this policy of controlling the center by using his pieces. On the other hand, he may resort to pawn moves.

All this sounds inconsistent, but it really isn’t. It puts a considerable burden on White, who must be prepared to contend with either policy on Black’s part. Thus, in a psychological sense it may be said that 1…Nf6 is a subtle attempt on Black’s part to dictate the course of the game.

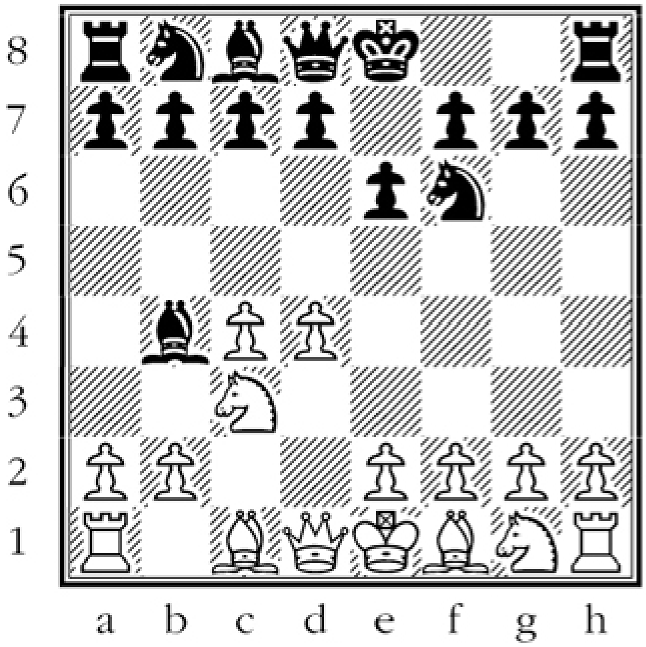
As in the Queen’s Gambit, the opening struggle in the Indian defenses revolves about control of the center and freedom of the pieces. Whoever achieves the advantage in these respects will have the better game.

Now let us see how these theoretical concepts apply to the specific problems of the Nimzo-Indian Defense. Here are the opening moves:

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3

Now White is on the point of playing e2-e4, with a pawn center that would crush Black. Here is a crucial situation typical of the problems in this defense.

Of course, Black can solve the difficulty readily enough by playing 3…d5, getting his fair share of the center by *transposing* into the …e6 defense of the Queen’s Gambit Declined. But Black is intent on playing the Nimzo-Indian Defense. Therefore: **3…Bb4** (D)



Position after 3…Bb4

By pinning White’s knight, Black makes it impossible for White to advance 4.e4. Meanwhile, Black conceals his intentions: he may play …d5 or …d6 later on – or perhaps not move the d-pawn altogether!

White has a great variety of replies at his disposal. Before we consider them, we will have to reflect on the possible forms that the struggle for the center may take.

For example, Black may play …d5 later in order to stop White’s extreme expansion in the center with e2-e4.

Or Black may allow White to play e2-e4 and proceed to build up a “counter-center” with …d6 and …e5.

Another possibility is that Black may try …c5 by way of a flank thrust at White’s center.

But there are also other aspects to be considered. Black’s 3…Bb4 leads most of the time to the exchange of this bishop for White’s knight. In that case White has two bishops against bishop and knight. This is a decided point in White’s favor *if he also has a strong development.*

On the other hand, if Black develops rapidly and favorably (as generally happens in this defense), he can neutralize the theoretical advantage of the two bishops.

This must be appraised in the light of still another problem. It often happens that when Black plays …Bxc3, White retakes with his b-pawn.

This supports his d-pawn and is likely to give him the makings of a powerful pawn center.

On the other hand, Black reasons that the doubled c-pawns are a weakness, and he may elect to train his guns at the c4-square.

Who is right? It all depends on how the game continues. What we have here is a struggle of extreme tension, in which each player attempts to cash in his own potential advantages and nullity those of his opponent. In the detailed analysis that follows, you will repeatedly observe the clash between the rival conceptions.

These comments explain the widespread popularity of the Nimzo-Indian Defense. It offers great rewards to an enterprising and inventive player.

(a) 4.Qc2 Variation with 4…d5

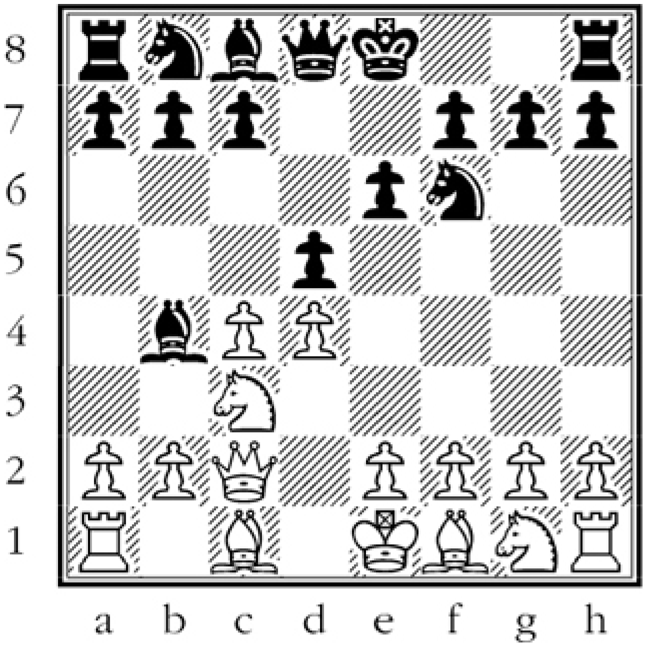
Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2

Renewing the struggle for the center. White is on the point of playing e2-e4.

4…d5 (D)



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Position after 4…d5

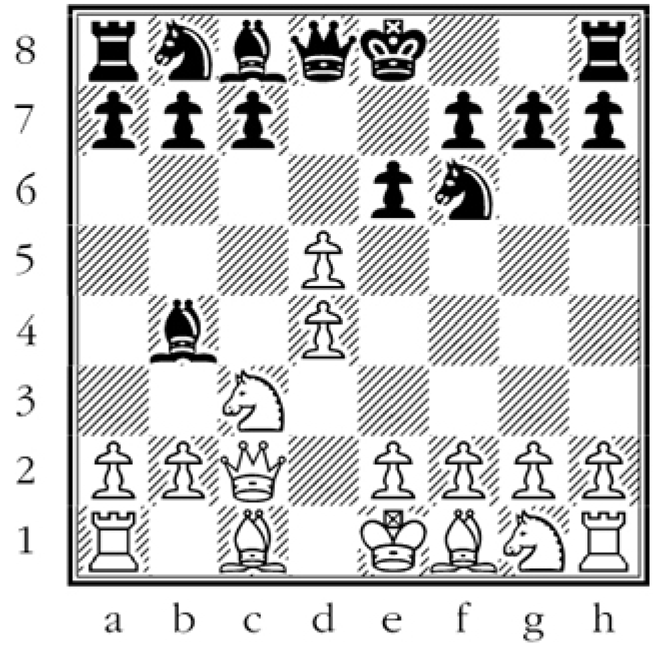
By advancing his d-pawn to d5 Black has adopted the simplest way to maintain a foothold in the center.

Now 5.a3 looks obvious, in order to get rid of the pin, but after 5…Bxc3+ 6.Qxc3 Ne4 7.Qc2, extremely wild play may result: 7…c5 8.dxc5 Nc6 9.Nf3 Qa5+ 10.Nd2 Nd4 11.Qd3 e5!? 12.b4 Qa4 13.Ra2!.

Or 7…Nc6 8.e3 e5!? 9.cxd5 Qxd5 10.Bc4 Qa5+ 11.b4 Nxb4 12.Qxe4 Nc2+ 13.Ke2 Qe1+ 14.Kf3 Nxa1 15.Bb2.

In either case we have wild complications which the average player does well to steer clear of.

5.cxd5 (D)



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Position after 5.cxd5

Again Black must make a choice; to command the center with pieces (5…Qxd5) or the d-pawn (5…exd5).

The simplest method of recapture is 5…exd5. If then 6.Bg5 h6 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.a3 Bxc3+ 9.Qxc3 c6 10.e3 0-0 11.Nf3 Bf5 and Black stands well.

Note that 7.Bh4 allows Black to counterattack vigorously with 7…c5! for example 8.dxc5 Nc6 9.0-0-0 g5! 10.Bg3 Qa5 etc.

5…Qxd5 6.Nf3 c5

Operating against White’s pawn center.

7.Bd2 Bxc3

In order to maintain the centralized position of his queen.

8.Bxc3 cxd4 9.Nxd4 e5

A valuable freeing move. If now 10.Nf5 Bxf5 11.Qxf5 Nc6 12.e3 0-0 13.Be2 Qe4! with equality.

10.Nf3 Nc6 11.e3 0-0 12.Be2 Bg4 13.h3

Equal game. White has the two bishops, but Black has freedom of action, for example 13…Bh5 14.0-0 Rfd8 15.a3 Bg6 16.Qc1 Ne4 etc.

(b) 4.Qc2 Variation with 4…Nc6 (Milner-Barry Variation)

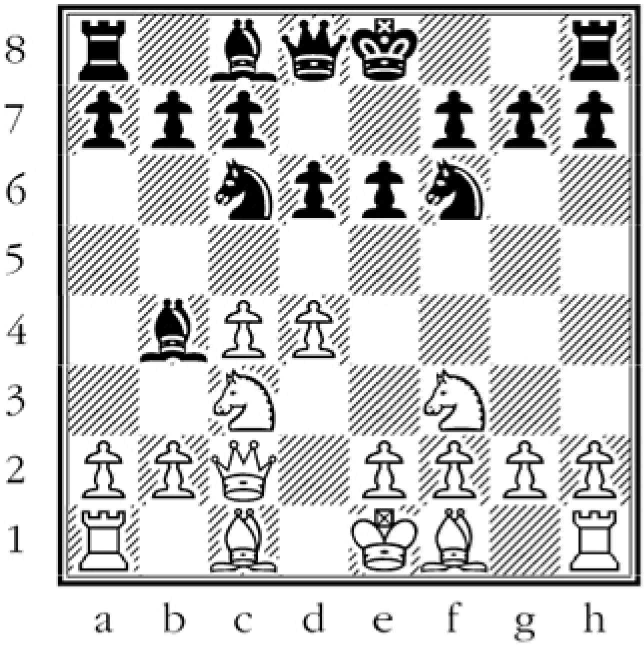
Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 Nc6

Gaining time by attacking White's d-pawn and preparing to build up a center with …d6 and …e5.

5.Nf3 d6 (D)



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Position after 5…d6

Black is prepared to concede the two bishops to White, as the forthcoming …e5 will maintain the balance of power in the center.

If now 6.a3 Bxc3+ 7.Qxc3 White has the two bishops and Black must play carefully to avoid a constricted position. 7…a5! prevents too much White expansion (by 8.b4). Then, after 8.b3 0-0 9.Bb2 Black plays for …e5 with 9…Re8! 10.Rd1 Qe7! etc.

6.Bd2 e5 7.a3 Bxc3 8.Bxc3 Qe7 9.dxe5

Loosening up the position so his dark-square bishop will have more scope.

9…dxe5 10.e3 a5!

Again preventing White from expanding unduly with b2-b4 (threatening b4-b5).

11.h3!

Preventing the development of Black's light-square bishop via …Bg4. But Black has a resourceful continuation.

11…0-0 12.Be2 g6!

Black maintains equality by preparing …Bf5. After 13.b3 Bf5 14.Qb2 Rfe8 15.0-0 Ne4 the position is approximately even.

(c) 4.Qc2 Variation with 4…c5

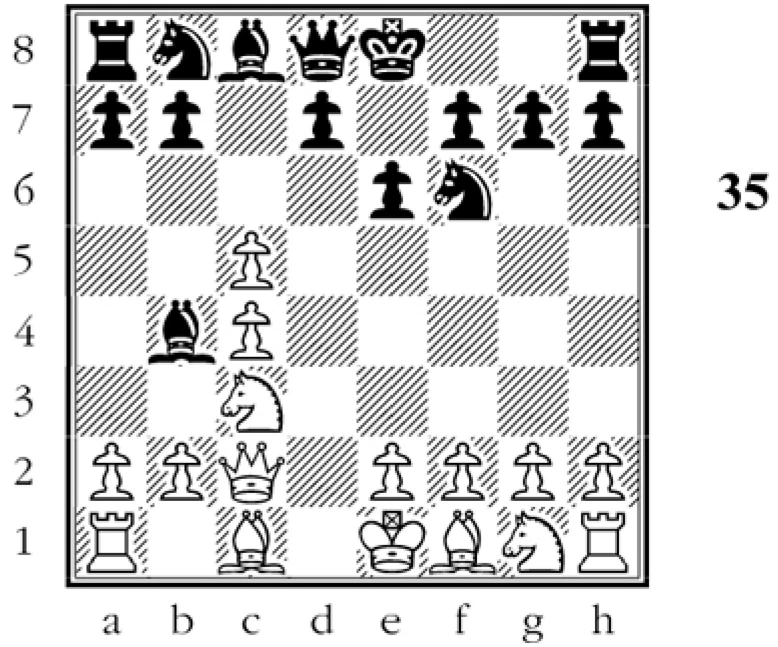
Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 c5

This flank thrust is intended to demolish White's center by removing White's d-pawn. White generally gets pressure on the open d-file and on the open long diagonal extending from a1 to h8. However, Black can equalize by getting good play for his pieces in the center.

5.dxc5 (D)



Position after 5.dxc5

Black can hold his own with 5…Bxc5 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Bg5 Be7 followed by …d6. But this leads to a cramped position which is not to everyone’s taste.

5…0-0

And now the pinning move 6.Bg5 looks good. However, Black counterattacks effectively with 6…Na6! 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.Qxc3 Nxc5. White has the two bishops, but Black has a good grip on the center, for example 9.Qc2 (to avoid …Nce4) 9…a5! 10.f3 a4 11.Rd1 Nb3 12.e4 Qa5+ 13.Bd2 Nxd2 14.Qxd2 d5 and Black has at least equality.

6.Nf3 Na6!

Here too the knight arrives rapidly at an influential post for controlling the center. If now 7.a3 Bxc3+! 8.Qxc3 Nxc5 9.b4 Nce4 and Black’s commanding centralized position makes up for White’s two bishops.

7.Bd2 Nxc5 8.a3 Bxc3 9.Bxc3 Nce4

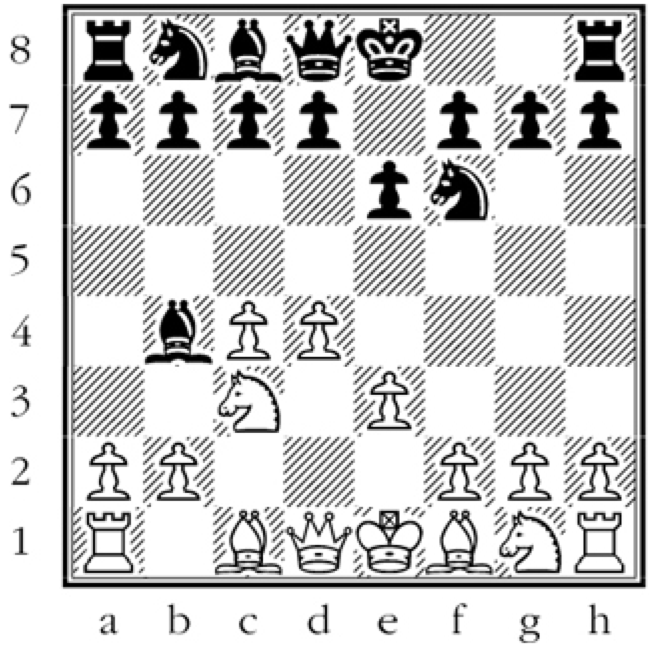
As in the previous note, Black has equality, thanks to the position of his centralized knight.

(d) 4.e3 Variation

Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 (D)



Position after 4.e3

White’s last move is stronger than it looks. He prepares the development of his light-square bishop and is ready to benefit by any advantages that may accrue from his having the bishop pair after …Bxc3(+).

If now 4…0-0, the play may very likely transpose into one of the variations shown below. An independent possibility is 5.Nge2 d5 6.a3 Be7 7.cxd5 exd5 8.g3 (much more promising than 8.Ng3 c5! and if 9.dxc5 Bxc5 10.b4 d4!) 8…Nbd7 9.Bg2 Nb6 10.Qd3 a5 11.a4 c6 12.0-0 Nbd7 13.f3 with the idea of forming a powerful pawn center with e3-e4.

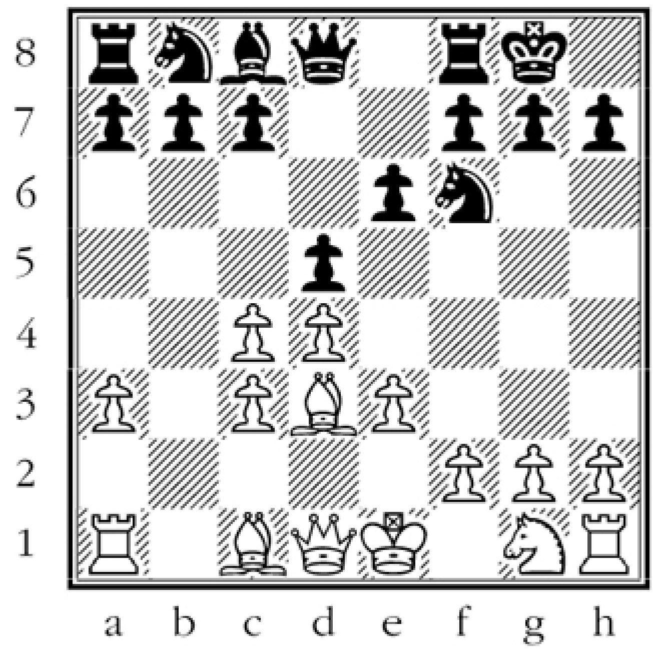
Against 4…b6 White can also proceed with 5.Nge2 and if 5…Ba6 6.a3 Be7 7.Nf4 d5 8.cxd5 Bxf1 9.Kxf1 exd5 10.g4! with a strong initiative.

Another way is 4…b6 5.Nge2 Bb7 6.a3 Bxc3+ 7.Nxc3 0-0 8.Bd3! c5 (not 8…Bxg2 9.Rg1 Bb7 10.e4 followed by e4-e5 with a withering attack) 9.d5! cramping Black’s game considerably. If then 9…exd5 10.cxd5 Nxd5? 11.Nxd5 Bxd5 12.Qh5 – or 10…Bxd5? 11.Nxd5 Nxd5 12.Be4 and White wins in either event.

4…d5 5.Bd3 0-0 6.a3

If White now continues 6.Nf3 c5 7.0-0 Nc6 8.a3, Black’s simplest course is 8…Bxc3 (Or Black may try 8…dxc4 9.Bxc4 cxd4 10.exd4 Be7. Then after 11.Qd3 b6 12.Ba2 Bb7 13.Bb1 g6 White has a freer game and attacking chances, while Black has pressure on White’s isolated d-pawn.) 9.bxc3 b6 with good prospects for Black despite White’s two bishops.

6…Bxc3+ 7.bxc3 (D)



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Position after 7.bxc3

White’s sturdy pawn center and his possession of two bishops give him many powerful attacking chances.

Black must handle the defense with great care. Thus, after 7…c5 8.cxd5! exd5 9.Ne2 b6 10.0-0 Ba6 11.Bxa6 Nxa6 12.Qd3 White has the makings of a powerful attack despite the disappearance of his attacking bishop. The sequel might be 12…c4 13.Qc2 Nb8 14.f3! Re8 15.Ng3 Nc6 16.Qf2 Qd7 17.Bb2 Re6 18.Rae1 Rae8 (Black strives in vain to prevent e3-e4) 19.Re2 g6 20.Rfe1 Na5 21.e4 Qb7 22.e5 followed by f3-f4 with a formidable “pawn-roller.”

7…dxc4! 8.Bxc4 c5 9.Nf3 Nc6 10.0-0 Qc7! 11.Bd3 e5 12.Qc2

An intensely interesting position. Black has freed himself admirably, but White hopes to open up the position and get his center pawns moving so that he can demonstrate the power of his bishops.

A possibility is 12…Rd8 13.Re1 Bg4 14.Nxe5 Nxe5 15.dxe5 Qxe5 16.f3 Be6 17.Rb1 c4 18.Bf1 Nd5! 19.Bd2 Qc7.

A wilder line of play is 12…Re8 (threatens …e4) 13.e4 exd4 14.cxd4 Bg4! 15.e5 Bxf3 16.exf6 Nxd4 17.Bxh7+ Kh8 18.fxg7+ Kxg7 19.Bb2

Rad8! 20.gxf3 Rh8! 21.Kh1 Rxh7.

In both cases Black holds his own because the free play of his pieces compensates for White's bishop pair. This is often the verdict on Nimzo-Indian variations.

(e) Sämisch Variation

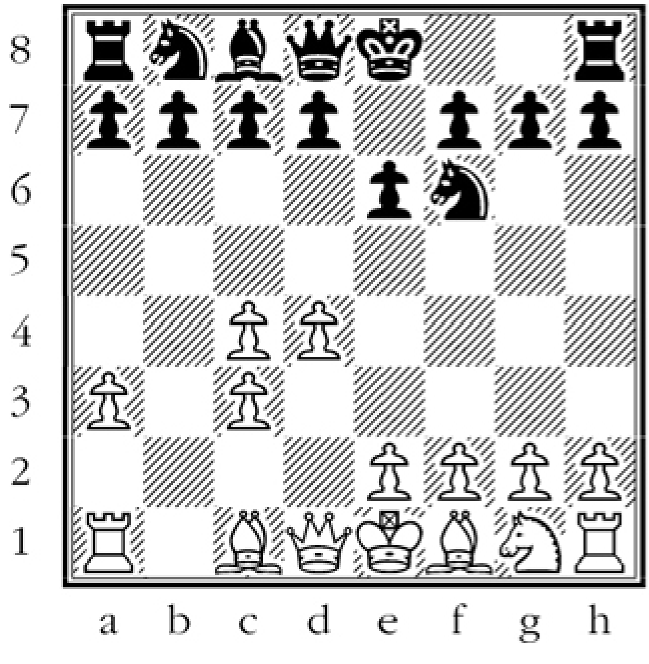
Nimzo-Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.a3

This leads to a very difficult game for both sides. After the following exchange White hopes to get a good attack, based on his two bishops and his powerful-looking pawn center. Black hopes for a closed position where his knights can maneuver skillfully; he also has prospects of turning White's pawn at c4 into a target.

4…Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 (D)



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Position after 5.bxc3

Note that White's pawn at c4 can no longer be protected by pawns, and must be protected by pieces. Hence this pawn is weak, and Black will try to train his guns on it.

5…c5!

This “fixes” White’s theoretically weak pawn a c4. In addition, Black exerts pressure on White’s pawn center.

6.e3 b6

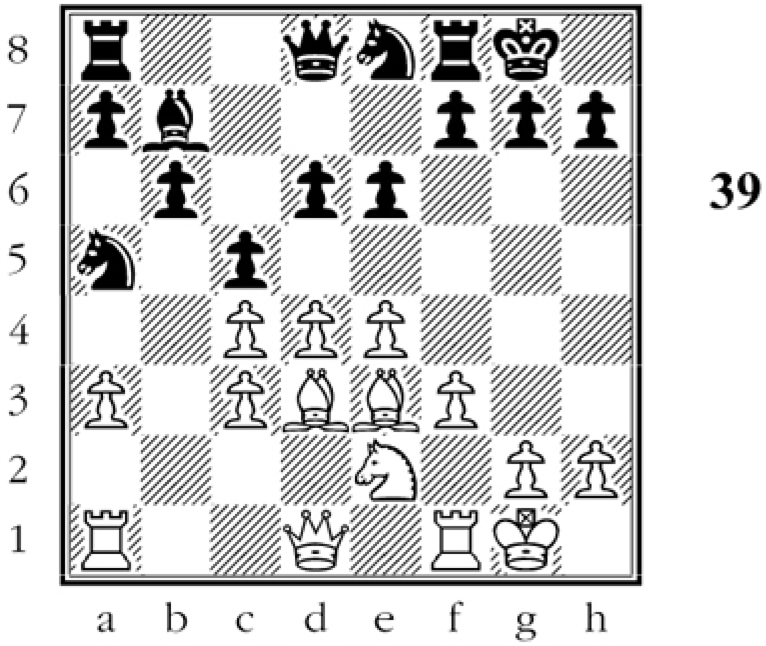
Black’s bishop will go to b7 (later to a6, to press against the weak pawn).

On the other hand, playing for an early …e5 is a doubtful policy, as it often allows White to open the f-file with impressive effect, for example 6…Nc6 7.Bd3 e5 8.Ne2 d6 9.0-0 Qe7 10.e4! Nd7 11.f4 b6 12.Ng3 g6 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.d5 Na5 15.Ra2! Nb7 16.Raf2 Nd6 17.Bh6 with considerable positional advantage for White.

7.Bd3 Bb7 8.f3 Nc6 9.Ne2 0-0 10.e4 Ne8!

A star move. To allow the pinning maneuver would be fatal to Black’s freedom of action. The retreat of the knight also prepares for the blockading move …f5.

11.Be3 d6 12.0-0 Na5! (D)



Position after 12…Na5!

Black begins the attack on the c4-pawn.

Black has the initiative, as Black's threats against the c4-pawn outweigh White's attacking possibilities on the other wing. For example: 13.Ng3 Qd7 14.f4 f5 15.Qe2 (if 15.dxc5 dxc5 16.exf5 Rd8!) 15…g6! 16.Rfd1 Ng7 17.Ra2 Qa4! 18.Bc1 Rac8! (note the mounting pressure on White's c4-pawn) 19.Qc2 Qxc2 20.Rxc2 Ba6! and Black wins the weak c4-pawn.

Queen's Indian Defense

In this defense Black fianchettoes his light-square bishop very early, with a view to commanding the long diagonal, particularly the e4-square. White does best to fianchetto his light-square bishop, thus carrying on a long-range duel for control of the diagonal.

The dual often centers about a specific problem: White wants to enforce e2-e4, Black wants to prevent this move. If White gets in e2-e4, he will have an advantage in space, which explains the critical nature of the struggle. Bear in mind, though, that since White plays an early Nf3 (instead of Nc3 as in the Nimzo-Indian Defense), it will not be easy for him to enforce e2-e4.

On the whole, White gets a freer game than Black in this opening. White's goal is to secure the initiative; Black's goal is to maintain an adequate defense.

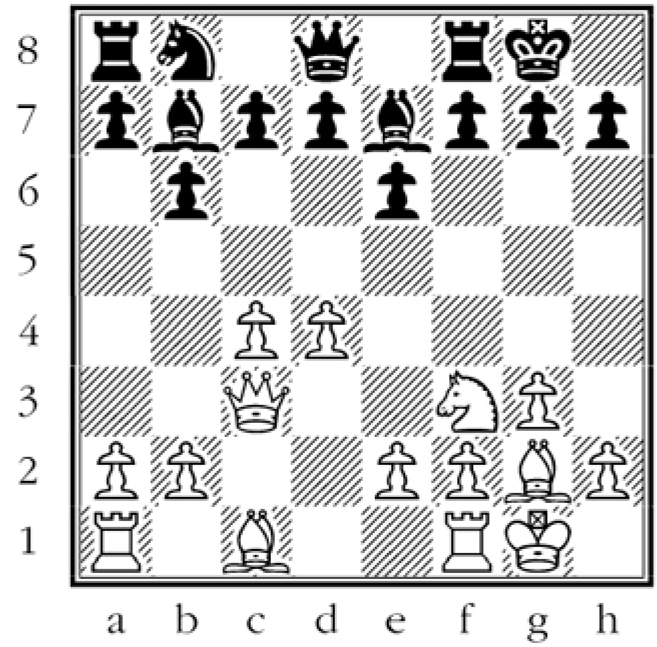
(a) 5…Be7 Variation
Queen's Indian Defense
White – Black
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Bb7 5.Bg2 Be7 6.0-0 0-0 7.Nc3 Ne4

Black can now get a firm foothold in the center with 7…d5 at the cost of condemning his light-square bishop to inactivity after 8.Ne5!.

8.Qc2 Nxc3

White's next move is more or less forced, as 9.bxc3 would give him doubled c-pawns with no tangible compensation.

9.Qxc3 (D)



Position after 9.Qxc3

Black has a double goal: to retain control of e4, and also to form a center of his own with …d6 and …e5.

White has good chances of getting the initiative: if for example 9…f5 10.d5! exd5 11.Ne1 *with lasting pressure on Black's game.*

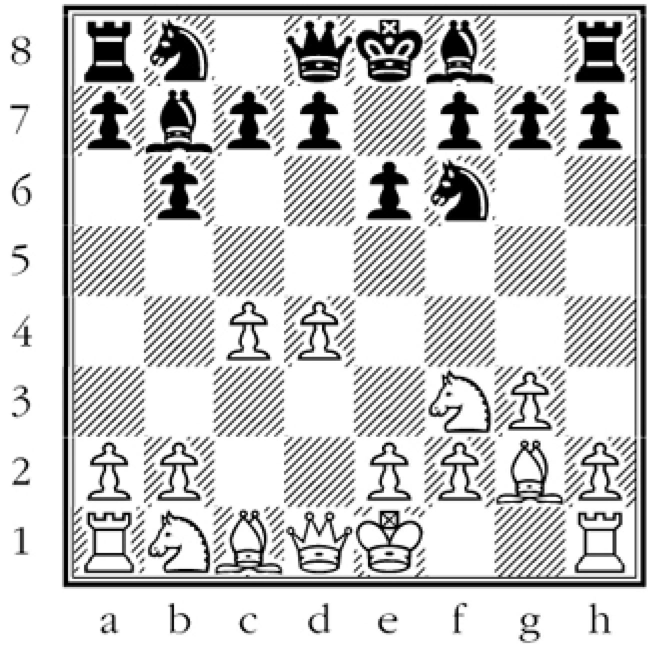
Another possibility from Diagram 40 is 9…Be4 10.Bf4! d6 11.Qe3! Bb7 12.Rfd1 Nd7 13.b4 Nf6 14.a4 a5 15.b5 *and White has considerably more freedom of action.*

(b) 5…Bb4+ Variation

Queen's Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Bb7 5.Bg2 (D)



Position after 5.Bg2

Black decides on a simplifying exchange which, however, still leaves him with difficult problems to solve.

5…Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Bxd2+

The obvious reply is now 7.Nbxd2. But White's queen knight will be more aggressively posted at c3 than at d2. This explains White's next move: **7.Qxd2! 0-0 8.Nc3 d6**

After this White will be able to play e2-e4, but if instead 8…Ne4 9.Qc2! Nxc3 10.Ng5! winning the exchange because of the mate threat.

9.Qc2 Qe7 10.0-0 c5

Black must forestall e2-e4, which would permit White to answer a later …c5 with d4-d5, seriously constricting Black's game.

11.Rad1 cxd4 12.Nxd4 Bxg2

After 13.Kxg2 White is on the way to playing e2-e4, which will give him much greater command of the board. White has an unmistakable initiative.

King's Indian Defense

This is generally considered the most complex and most interesting of all the Indian defenses. As in other “Indian” lines, Black avoids answering 1.d4 with 1…d5. Instead, he plays 1…Nf6 and continues with …g6 and …Bg7.

Of course, he cannot wholly neglect the center. He almost invariably plays …d6 followed in due course by …e5. After that, he has several possibilities. One is to play …exd4, opening up the long diagonal for his fianchettoes bishop. This has the customary drawback of freeing White’s position as well.

Or Black may stand pat after …e5, giving White the opportunity to push by with d4-d5, which leads to a rather locked position in which the advantage generally goes to the player who can first advance the f-pawn two squares.

Theoretically, White ought to have the advantage because his position is freer. But Black’s position is solid and full of resource; a tenacious player can accomplish miracles with this defense.

(a) 3.g3 Variation with …d6
King’s Indian Defense
White – Black
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 0-0

Experience has shown that fianchettoing is an effective way to develop White’s light-square bishop.

5.e4 d6 6.Ne2

All in all this is preferable to 6.Nf3. At e2 this knight does not stand in the way of f2-f4.

6…e5 7.Nbc3

Also possible is 7.d5, which on the whole seems to give White preferable chances. For he can strive to gain further terrain with f2-f4 as well as b2-b4 followed by c4-c5. A likely sequel is 7…a5 8.0-0 Nbd7 9.Nbc3 Nc5 10.h3 Ne8 11.Be3 f5 12.exf5 gxf5 13.f4 and White’s game is more promising.

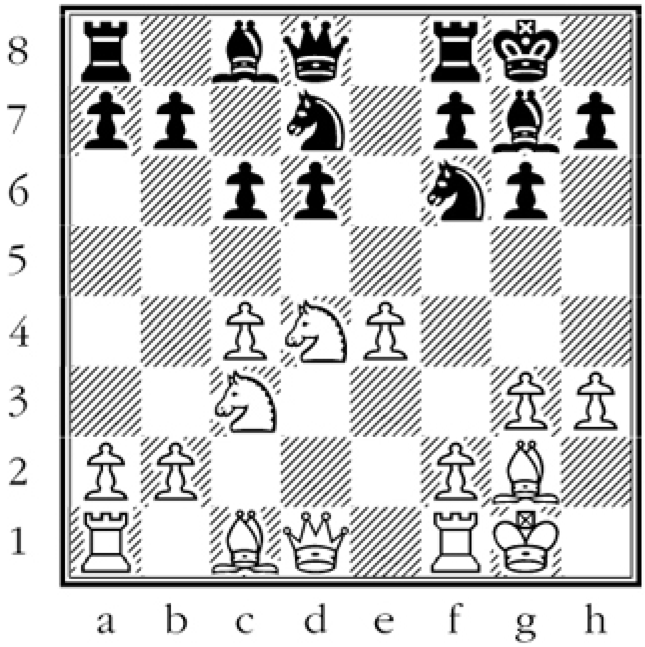
7…Nbd7 8.0-0 c6

In order to be able to play …Qc7 or …Qb6. In some cases the move prepares for an eventual …d5, which is, however, too ambitious a project.

9.h3!

White wants to play Be3, but first rules out the annoying …Ng4.

9…exd4 10.Nxd4 (D)



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Position after 10.Nxd4

Black has obtained maneuvering freedom for his knights and fianchettoed bishop. However, his weakened d-pawn is readily subject to pressure.

Black has numerous possibilities here, but White maintains the upper hand with accurate play. Thus, if 10…Re8 11.Be3 Nb6 12.b3 d5? 13.exd5 cxd5 14.c5 Nbd7 15.Ndb5 Qa5 16.a3! Ne4?! 17.b4 Nxc3 18.Nxc3 Qd8 19.Nxd5! Bxa1 20.Qxa1 and White has an overwhelming game in return for the sacrifice of the exchange.

Another possibility is 10…Re8 11.Be3 (also good is 11.Re1 Nc5 12.Bf4 with pressure on the d-pawn) 11…Nc5 12.Qc2 a5 13.Rad1 (threatens 14.Nxc6! bxc6 15.Bxc5) 13…Qe7 14.Rfe1 and White has a fine game. (Note the trap 14…Nfxe4? 15.Nxe4 Nxe4 16.Bxe4 Qxe4 17.Bd2! and White wins!) *The superior development of White's pieces assures him the better game with careful play.*

(b) Be2 Variation

King’s Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.Be2 0-0 6.Nf3

A plausible-looking alternative is 6.Bg5, but Black can take advantage of the absence of White’s bishop from the queenside in this fashion: 6…c5! 7.d5 e6 8.Nf3 exd5 9.cxd5 h6 10.Bf4 b5! 11.Bxb5 Nxe4! 12.Nxe4 Qa5+ 13.Qd2 Qxb5 14.Nxd6 Qxb2 15.Qxb2 Bxb2 16.Rb1 Bc3+ 17.Kd1 Ba6 18.Bxh6 Rd8 19.Bf4 Ba5! and the threat of …Bc7 enables Black to regain his pawn with a superior position, thanks to his two bishops.*

6…e5

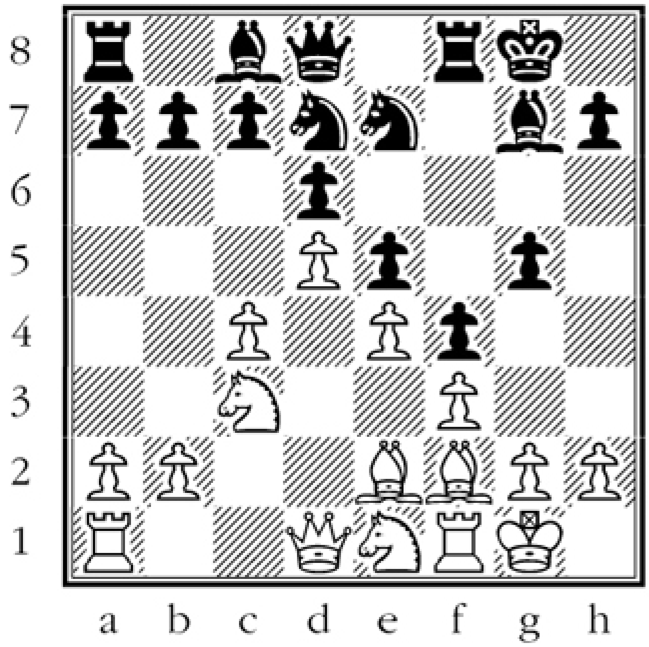
Black does not fear 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.Nxe5 which he can answer with 8…Nxe4!.

7.0-0 Nc6!

The old move was 7…Nbd7, which allowed Black to equalize after 8.Re1 c6 9.Bf1 Re8 10.b3 exd4 11.Nxd4 d5! or 10.Rb1 exd4 11.Nxd4 d5!.

However, on 7…Nbd7 White maintains the initiative with 8.d5 Nc5 9.Qc2 a5 10.Ne1! Nfd7 11.Be3 f5 12.exf5 gxf5 13.f4 e4 14.Qd2 Nf6 15.Nc2. White will eventually break through with g2-g4. Meanwhile, he commands the vital d4-square and more than adequately blockades Black’s passed pawn.

8.d5 Ne7 9.Ne1 Nd7! 10.Be3 f5 11.f3 f4 12.Bf2 g5 (D)



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Position after 12…g5

A very exciting position. White attacks on the queenside, intending to open lines there with c4-c5. Black attacks on the kingside, intending to open lines there with …g4.

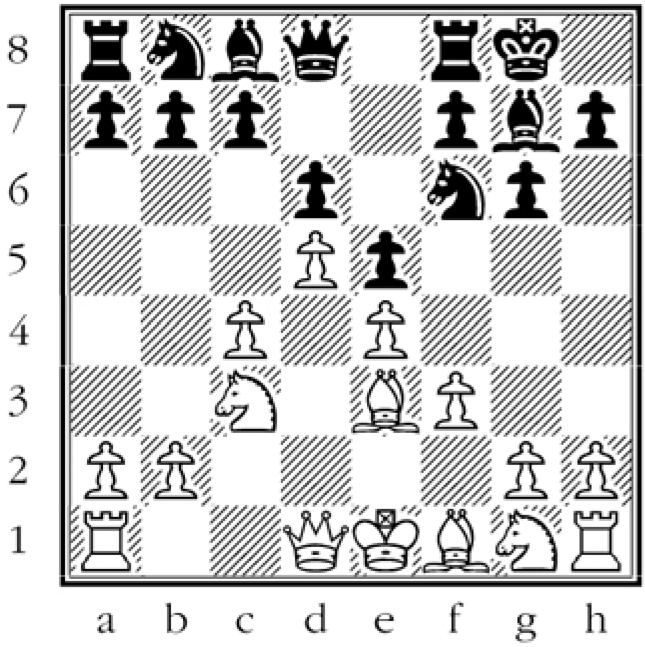
13.Nd3 Nf6

Another way is 13…Rf6 followed by …Rg6 intending …g4.

14.c5 Ng6 15.Rc1 Rf7 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.Nb5 g4

Both sides have carried out their plans according to schedule, and a fierce fight is in progress.

(c) Sämisch Variation
King’s Indian Defense
White – Black
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.Be3 e5 7.d5 (D)



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Position after 7.d5

White’s solid fifth move is the key to this variation. He delays somewhat the development of his kingside while he prepares to castle on the other wing and begins an attack with g2-g4 and h2-h4 etc.

7…c5 8.Qd2 Nh5 9.0-0-0 f5 10.exf5 gxf5 11.Bd3 a6 12.Nge2 b5?!

Black offers a pawn in order to open attacking lines against the hostile king. But White is more interested in furthering his own attack.

13.Rdg1 bxc4 14.Bb1!

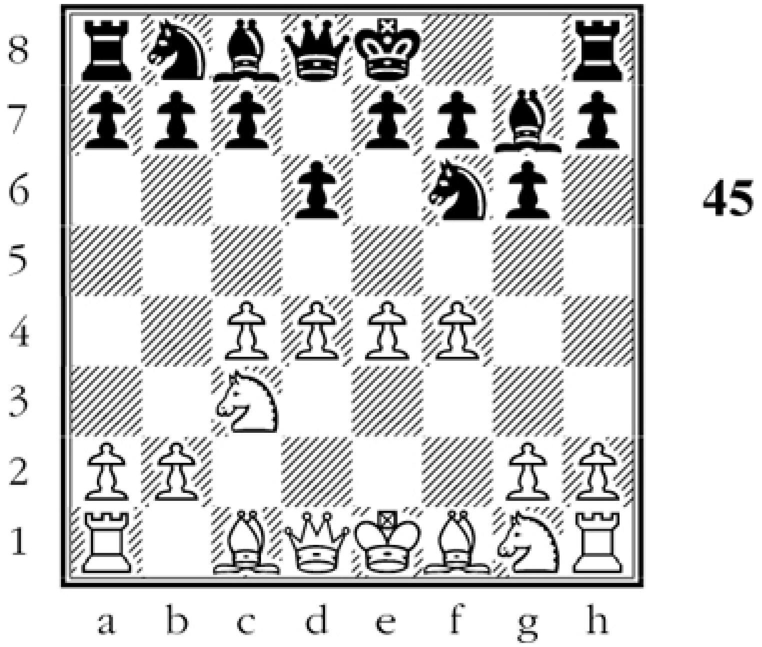
Played in order to lend greater strength to White’s coming g2-g4. *White’s attack on the open file should then win for him.*

(d) Four Pawns’ Attack

King’s Indian Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f4 (D)



Position after 5.f4

White’s last move is very aggressive and may leave Black with a very cramped game. On the other hand, the slightest inexactitude on White’s part may grant Black a powerful counterattack.

5…c5 6.dxc5

Best. After 6.d5 0-0 7.Nf3 e5! Black’s game is quite solid (8.fxe5 dxe5 9.Nxe5 Nxe4!). After the text, 6…dxc5 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.e5 gives Black a poor game.

6…Qa5

Threatens …Nxe4.

7.Bd3 Qxc5 8.Qe2 Nc6

White now continues 9.Nf3 followed by Be3, after which his more harmonious development should tell in his favor.

Summary: On the whole, White’s best chance of obtaining a solid positional advantage stems from the early fianchetto of the light-square bishop – Variation (a).

Grünfeld Defense

In this Indian defense, Black combines the fianchetto of this dark-square bishop with …d5. As a rule, Black's d-pawn disappears quickly, allowing White to set up an impressive pawn center.

To make up for White's advantage in this respect, Black must concentrate on agile maneuvers with his pieces. In some cases, he can hit back at White's center with …c5. At all times Black must be prepared to put his dark-square bishop to good use along the long diagonal.

(a) Exchange Variation

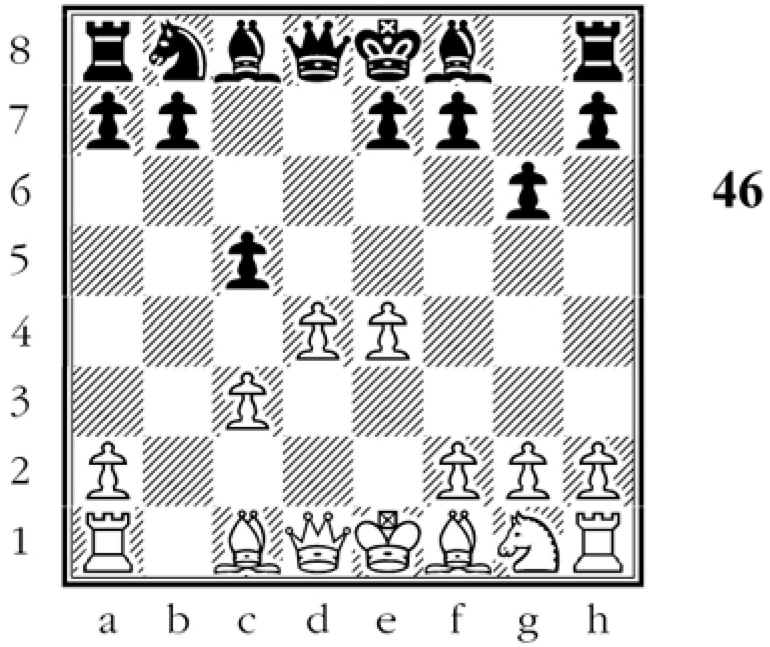
Grünfeld Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5

White sets out at once to build up a pawn center. After the quiet alternative 4.e3 Bg7 5.Nf3 0-0 6.Qb3 e6 7.Bd2 b6 Black fianchettoes his other bishop with a good game.

4…Nxd5 5.e4 Nxc3 6.bxc3 c5! (D)



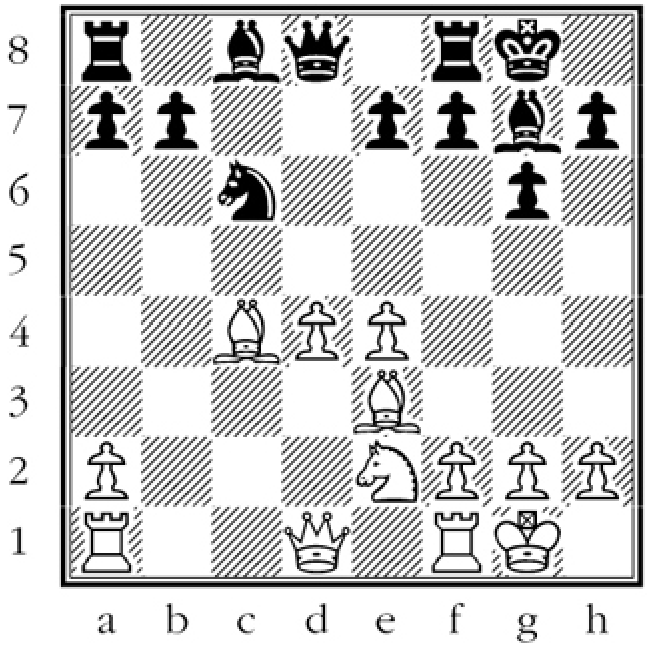
Position after 6…c5!

Black loses no time in hitting at White's powerful pawn center. Black will immediately intensify the pressure with …Bg7.

7.Bc4 Bg7 8.Ne2!

The more aggressive-looking 8.Nf3 allows a future pin by …Bg4.

8…0-0 9.0-0 cxd4 10.cxd4 Nc6 11.Be3 (D)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Position after 11.Be3

A crucial position, as Black must now be prepared to demonstrate the effectiveness of his pressure on the center pawns.

11…Na5! 12.Bd3 Nc6!

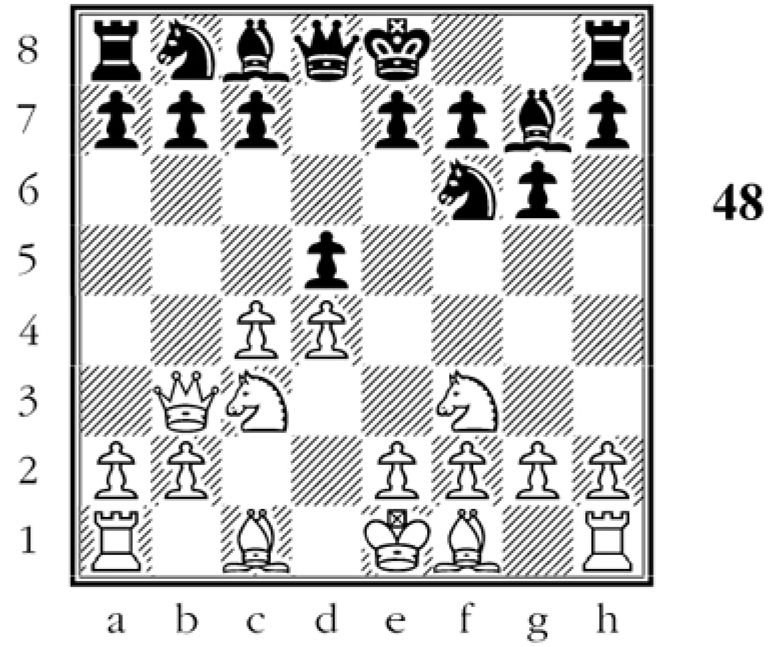
Thus Black establishes equality. White must guard his d-pawn, and if 13.Bc4 Na5 etc. threatens to repeat moves indefinitely. If 13.Bc2 b6 intending 14…Nb4 15.Bb3 Ba6 with an excellent game for Black.

(b) Russian System

Grünfeld Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Qb3 (D)



Position after 5.Qb3

White insists on clearing up the position in the center. As 5…e6 or 5…c6 would be rather passive, Black gives up the center in the hope of getting active play for his pieces.

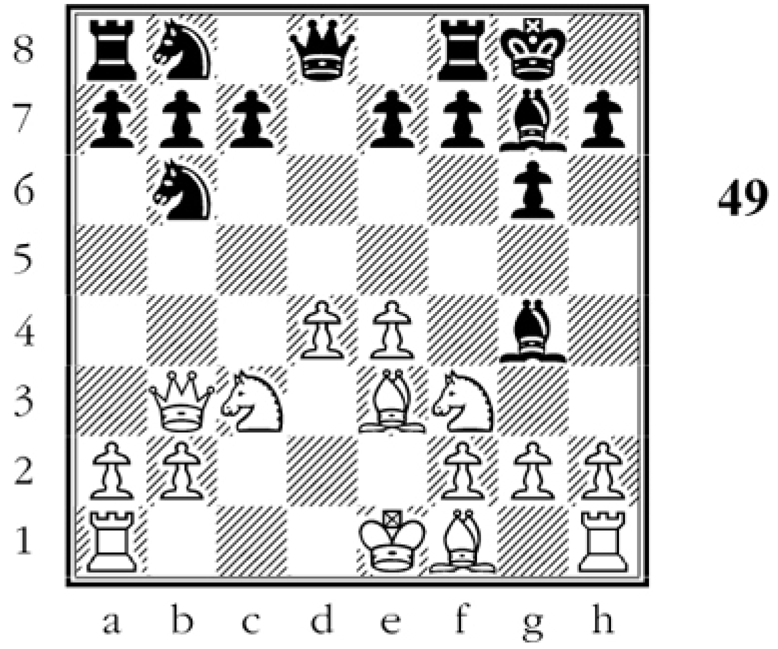
5…dxc4 6.Qxc4 0-0

As in the previous variation, White now creates an imposing pawn center.

7.e4 Bg4

Black attacks the knight which guards the d-pawn.

8.Be3 Nfd7 9.Qb3 Nb6 (D)



Position after 9…Nb6

White’s d-pawn is under pressure, now that the black king knight has unmasked the diagonal of Black’s fianchettoed bishop. However, White has ample resources.

10.Rd1 Nc6 11.d5 Ne5 12.Be2 Nxf3+ 13.gxf3 Bh3

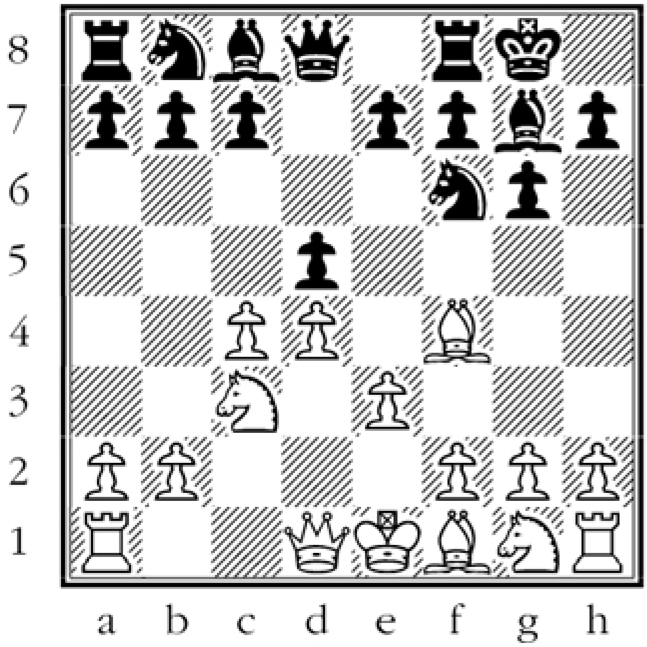
White has considerably more maneuvering space for his pieces, and after 14.Rg1 Qc8 15.f4! Bd7 16.f5! he has a formidable attack.

(c) 4.Bf4 Variation

Grünfeld Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bf4 Bg7 5.e3 0-0! (D)



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Position after 5.0-0

Black's last move amounts to a gambit, as White can now win a pawn. However, Black's threats assure him adequate compensation.

After 6.cxd5 Nxd5 7.Nxd5 Qxd5 8.Bxc7 White has won a pawn. However, Black gets a very strong game with 8…Na6! for example 9.Bg3 Bf5 (threatens 10…Nb4) 10.a3 Rac8 with a view to …Rc2. Also possible is 9.Bxa6 bxa6 when White's most prudent course is 10.Nf3, allowing Black to regain the pawn with 10…Qb7. If instead 10.Qf3 Qb5!! when 11.Qxa8 will not do because of 11…Qxb2 12.Rd1 Qc3+ 13.Rd2 Bg4! and wins.

6.Rc1 c5! 7.dxc5 Be6!

Black stands well despite the pawn minus, for example 8.cxd5 Nxd5 9.Nxd5 Bxd5 10.b3 Qa5+ 11.Qd2 Qxd2+ 12.Kxd2 Rd8 etc.

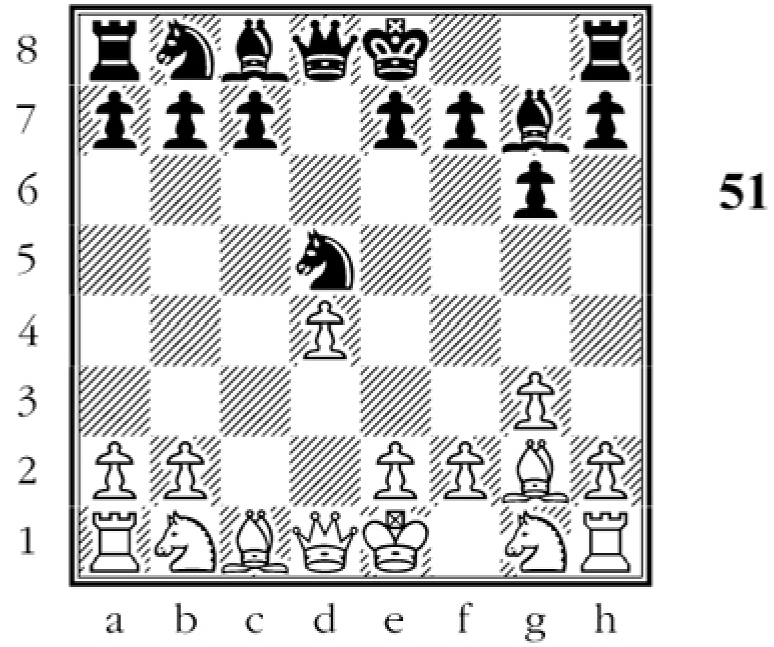
Summary: White should rely on his pawn center, while Black should strive for utmost mobility. Variation (b) favors White, while the other two lines are satisfactory for Black.

(d) Neo-Grünfeld Defense

Neo-Grünfeld Defense

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Bg7 4.Bg2 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 (D)



Position after 5…Nxd5

White plans to get a powerful center pawn position. Black hopes to prove that White’s plans are too ambitious.

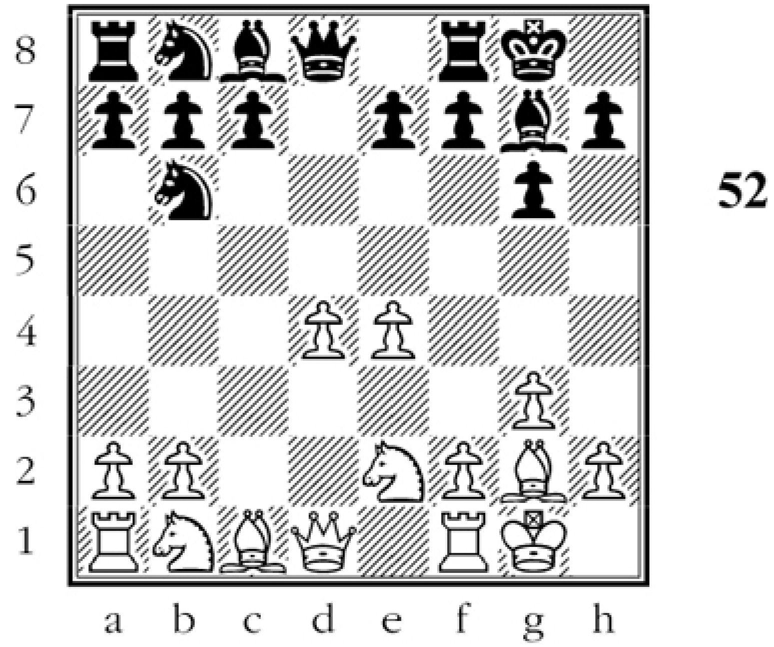
6.e4 Nb6

Though 6…Nb4 is playable, it involves tactical finesses, for example 7.Qa4+ N8c6 8.d5 b5! (even 8…0-0! is possible, for if 9.dxc6 Nd3+ and Black regains the piece) 9.Qxb5 (or 9.Qb3? Nd4!) 9…Nc2+ 10.Kd1 Bd7 and White cannot play 11.Kxc2?? Nd4+ nor 11.dxc6?? Bxc6+. And after 7.d5 c6 8.Ne2 (8.a3 is best answered by 8…Qa5!) 8…cxd5 9.exd5 Bf5 10.Qa4+ N8c6! 11.Nbc3! (not 11.dxc6?? Nc2+ 12.Kf1 Qd1#) 11…Bc2! or 11…b5! and Black can hold his own in the coming complications.)

7.Ne2

Immediate measures against White’s center are futile, for example 7…e5 8.d5 c6 9.Nbc3 cxd5 10.exd5 and White’s passed pawn is a power for the endgame.

7…0-0 8.0-0 (D)



Position after 8.0-0

Black cannot make any headway against White’s powerful center. For example 8…c5 9.d5 and Black’s knights have no prospects.

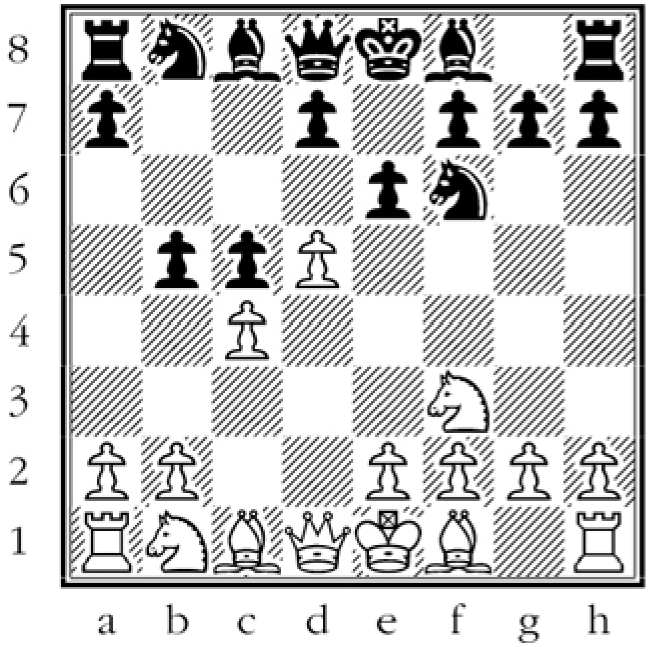
8…Nc6 9.d5 Nb8 10.Nec3! c6 11.a4! cxd5 12.exd5 Nc4 13.Re1 Re8 14.Na3! Nd6 15.Nab5!

White’s pressure is stifling. But the avoidance of this line (with 6…Nb4) requires first-class tactical abilities.

Blumenfeld Counter Gambit

As we have seen earlier, counter gambits, being attempts to wrest the initiative out of White’s hands, have slight chance to succeed. This reasoning applies to the Blumenfeld line.

Blumenfeld Counter Gambit
White – Black
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c5 4.d5 b5?! (D)



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Position after 4…b5

Risky – and unnecessary as well, as the simple 4…exd5 transposes into the Benoni line described on page 281. Black hopes for the speculative continuation 5.dxe6 fxe6 6.cxb5 d5 which gives him a strong center and open lines for his pieces in return for a relatively unimportant wing pawn.

5.Bg5! exd5

Another way, just as disadvantageous, is 5…Qa5+ 6.Qd2 Qxd2+ 7.Nbxd2 exd5 8.Bxf6 gxf6 9.cxd5 Bb7 10.e4 a6 11.Nh4 with considerable positional advantage for White.

6.cxd5 h6 7.Bxf6 Qxf6 8.Qc2 d6 9.e4 a6 10.a4 b4 11.h3!

With his last move, White has hemmed in Black's light-square bishop. After 11…Be7 12.Nbd2 0-0 13.Be2 Nd7 14.Nc4 White has considerably greater freedom of action. Black's two bishops can accomplish little.

Budapest Defense

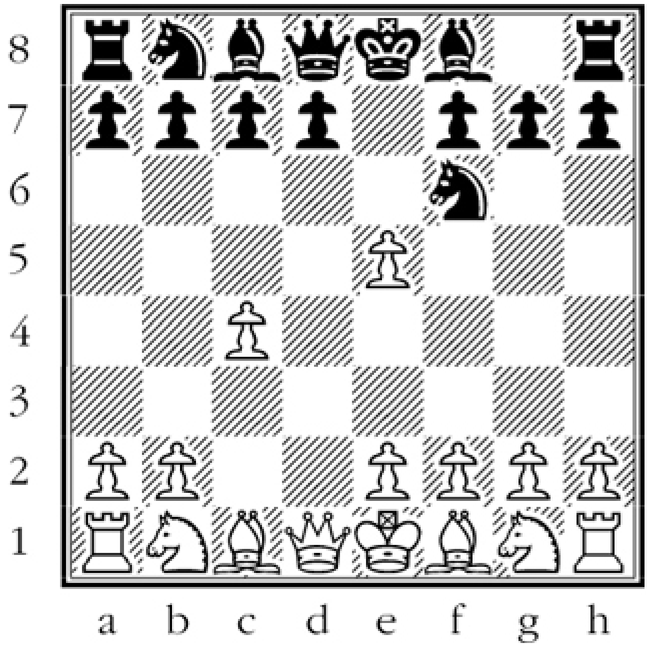
This is also a counter gambit, but it has more positional justification than most defenses of its kind. If White clings slavishly to the gained material, he often gets into trouble. On the other hand, if he develops systematically he is likely to get the better game. A too rapid advance, however, should be shunned, as it may enable Black to counterattack successfully.

(a) 4.Bf4 Variation
Budapest Defense
White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5

This is the counter gambit.

3.dxe5 (D)



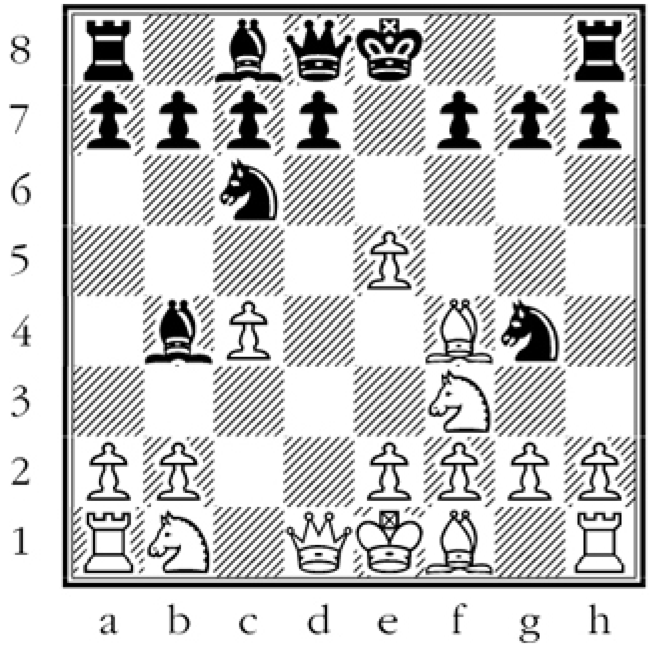
Position after 3.dxe5

If Black tries 3…Ne4, White continues with simple development: 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Nbd2 Nc5 6.g3 d6 7.exd6 Qxd6 8.Bg2 Bf5 9.a3 a5 10.0-0 0-0-0 11.b4! returning the pawn for a winning attack.

3…Ng4

And now 4.f4? would be quite bad: 4…Bc5 5.Nh3 f6 with an overwhelming game for Black.

4.Bf4 Nc6 5.Nf3 Bb4+ (D)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Position after 5…Bb4+

6.Nbd2

If now 6.Nc3 Qe7 7.Qd5 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 f6! and White’s extra pawn, being doubled and isolated, is not worth much.

6…Qe7 7.a3 Ngxe5 8.Nxe5

If now 8.axb4??? Nd3#.

8…Nxe5 9.e3 Bxd2+ 10.Qxd2 d6 11.Be2 Ng6

After 12.Bg3 0-0 13.0-0 White’s two bishops and slightly greater freedom of action give him the better prospects.

(b) 4.e4 Variation

Budapest Defense

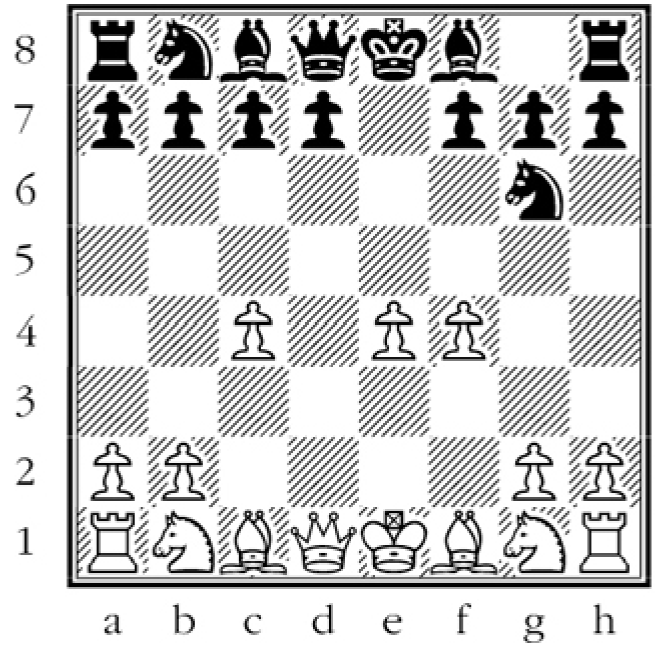
White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.e4

Here White’s objective is to develop rapidly. But he must be careful not to overextend himself.

4…Nxe5 5.f4 Ng6

Apparently better than 5…Nec6, which leaves White with a much freer game after 6.a3 a5 7.Be3 Na6 8.Nf3 Bc5 9.Qd2 d6 10.Nc3 0-0 11.Bd3 Bxe3 12.Qxe3 Nc5 13.0-0-0. (D)



Position after 5…Ng6

Black will attempt to prove that White's numerous pawn moves have weakened his position.

6.Be3

If 6.Nf3 Bb4+ 7.Nc3 Qf6! 8.e5 Qb6 9.Qd3 d6 10.a3 Bxc3+ 11.Qxc3 dxe5 12.Nxe5 Nxe5 13.Qxe5+ Qe6 with a level position.

6…Bb4+ 7.Nc3 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 Qe7 9.Bd3 f5

White is hard put to it to defend the center.

10.Qc2 fxe4 11.Bxe4 Nxf4! 12.Bxf4 d5! 13.cxd5 Bf5

After 14.0-0-0 Bxe4 15.Qb2 Nd7 Black's position seems somewhat exposed, but he just has time to castle and consolidate his position.

Benoni Defense

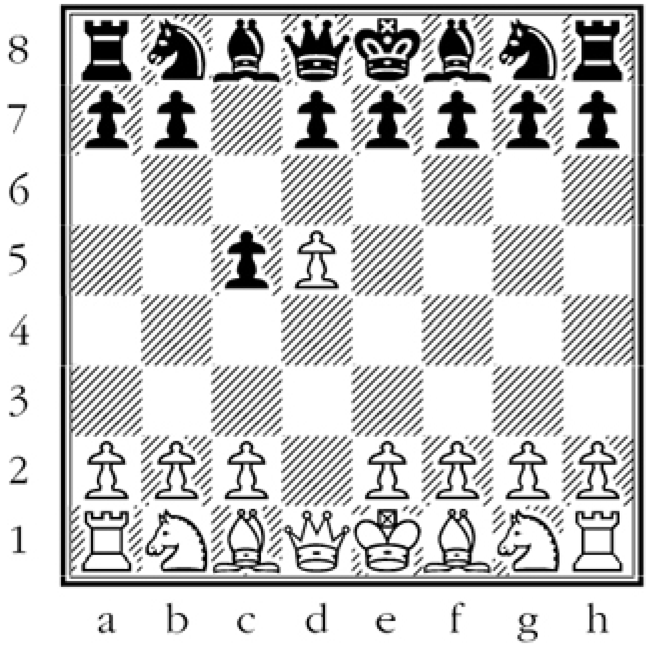
After 1.d4 c5 White can reply 2.dxc5, but in that case Black recovers the pawn comfortably with 2…e6. The usual move against the counter gambit is therefore 2.d5, which leads to a complex maneuvering game in which White has a greater command of the board.

Benoni Defense
White – Black

1.d4 c5

An alternative line is 1…Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5, with this likely continuation: 3…e6 4.Nc3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.Nf3 g6 7.g3 Bg7 8.Bg2 0-0 9.0-0 a6 (in the hope of gaining space on the queenside with …b5) 10.a4! Nbd7 11.Nd2 Re8 12.a5! with considerable pressure.

2.d5 (D)



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Position after 2.d5

A position which leaves both sides scope for considerable maneuvering. As a rule White has the better prospects because Black's position is apt to become cramped.

2…e5 3.e4 d6 4.Bd3 Ne7

Black can also try 4…a6, but then 5.a4! rules out the intended …b5.

5.Ne2 g6

Here 5…f5 opens up the game to White’s advantage: 6.f4! fxe4 7.Bxe4 Nd7 8.0-0 Nf6 9.Nbc3! and White’s free, rapid development will tell in his favor.

On the other hand, 5…a6 6.a4! Ng6 7.Na3! Be7 8.Nc4! 0-0 9.0-0 Nd7 10.Bd2 b6 11.c3 Rb8 12.b4! leaves White with a strong queenside initiative.

6.c4 Bg7 7.Nbc3 0-0 8.0-0 f5 9.f4! Nd7

By now playing 10.Ng3! White maintains a strong initiative, for example 10…exf4 11.Bxf4 Ne5 12.exf5 Nxd3 13.Qxd3 Nxf5 14.Nge4! and White’s lasting pressure on Black’s weak d-pawn is embarrassing. White has two decisive threats in Nb5 and g2-g4, leaving Black at a loss for a good continuation.

Dutch Defense

As in the Queen’s Gambit Declined and the Queen’s Indian Defense, Black fights for control of the e4-square. In this defense he carries on the fight by playing an early …f5. He can then continue the struggle with …d5, or he can play …d6 with a view to forming a counter-center with …e5.

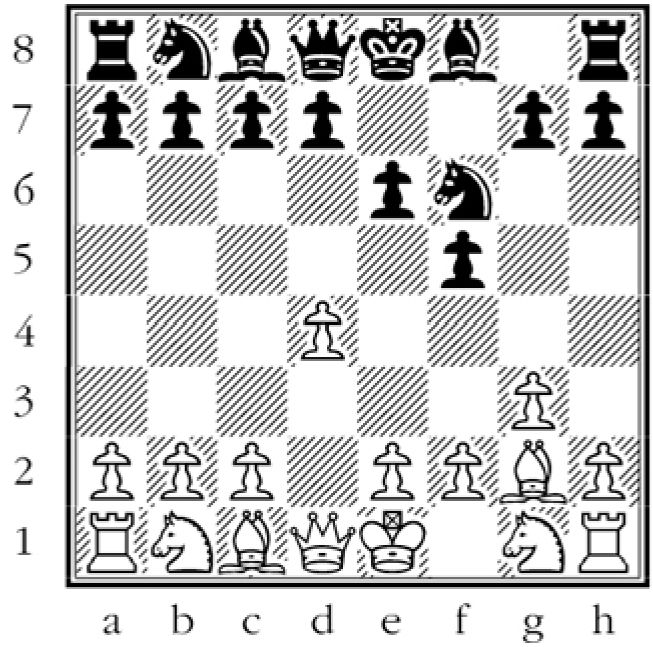
Theorists are pretty well agreed that White’s best course is to fianchetto his light-square bishop, striking at the important center squares. The development of White’s king knight poses an interesting problem – to develop it to f3, where it bears down on the e5-square; or to play Nh3 followed by Nf4, to bear down on the d5-square. Both methods have their good points.

(a) g2-g3 Variation

Dutch Defense

White – Black

1.d4 f5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 e6 (D)



Position after 3…e6

White must choose between developing his king knight at f3 or h3.

4.Nf3

We may consider this the main line, although 4.Nh3 is an excellent alternative: 4…d5 (Black has a “stonewall” formation) 5.0-0 Bd6 6.c4 c6. Then after 7.Nc3 Nbd7 8.Qd3 Ne4 9.f3! Nxc3 10.bxc3 White is ready to smash the center with e2-e4.

Another alternative is 4…Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6 7.Nc3 Qe8 8.e4 fxe4 9.Nf4! c6 10.Nxe4 with a fine game for White.

4…Be7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6

If Black adopts the stonewall formation with 6…d5, White can get a clear positional advantage in several ways. For example, 7.b3 c6 8.Ba3!. By exchanging the dark-square bishops White leaves Black with the light-square bishop, which is hemmed in by the black pawns on light squares.

Another way is 8.Nc3 Qe8 9.Qc2 Qh5 10.Ne5 Nbd7 11.Nd3! g5 12.f3! with a view to e2-e4! with a powerful initiative in the center.

7.Nc3 Qe8 8.Re1

A good alternative for White is 8.Qc2 Qh5 9.Bg5 e5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.Bxf6! gxf6 12.Nd5 Bd8 13.Rad1 c6 14.Nc3 Be6 15.Nh4! and White has all the play.

8…Qh5

Even after 8…Qg6 White can play 9.e4!, for after 9…fxe4 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Rxe4 Qxe4? 12.Nh4 Black's queen is trapped.

9.e4 fxe4 10.Nxe4 Nxe4 11.Rxe4

White, with his superior development, has lasting pressure on Black's position.

(b) Staunton Gambit

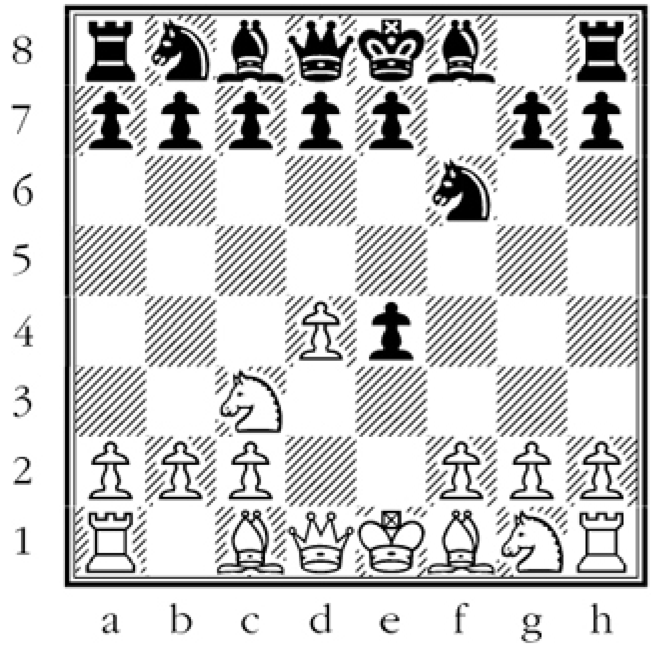
Staunton Gambit

White – Black

1.d4 f5 2.e4

A gambit attack which can give Black a great deal of trouble unless he plays carefully.

2…fxe4 3.Nc3 Nf6 (D)



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Position after 3…Nf6

4.Bg5

Black must avoid the trap 4…d5? for after 5.Bxf6 exf6 6.Qh5+ g6 7.Qxd5 White comes out a pawn ahead.

4…Nc6!

Black can hold his own, for example 5.f3 e5! 6.d5 Nd4 7.fxe4 Be7 8.Bc4 d6! 9.Nge2 Ng4!. Or 5.d5 Ne5 6.Qd4 Nf7 7.Bxf6 exf6 8.Nxe4 f5 9.Ng3 g6! 10.h4 Bh6!.

These variations show how Black gets an excellent game by consistently developing and seeking counterplay.

Réti Opening and Related Systems

From here to the end of the book we shall consider closed openings which are for the most part not characterized by the move 1.d4. They are given here in order to complete our survey of the most important closed openings.

Réti's Opening, starting with 1.Nf3, has great flexibility and possibilities of transposing into many other openings. It involves, as a rule, the immediate fianchetto of White’s light-square bishop and the ensuing fianchetto of the remaining bishop.

White’s strategy is to control the center squares from the flanks. Black generally counters with aggression in the center in order to obtain equality.

(a) London System
Réti Opening
White – Black

1.Nf3 d5

Black can fend off an immediate decision by first playing the flexible 1…Nf6, which may transpose to many other openings.

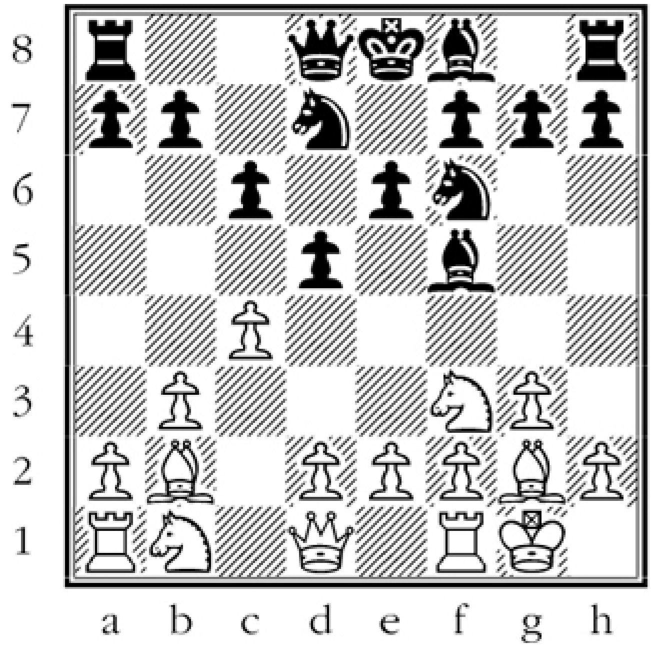
2.c4 c6

Now White has the option of transposing into the Queen’s Gambit Declined (Slav Defense, pages 261-265).

3.b3 Nf6 4.g3 Bf5!

A good development for this bishop, which now bears strongly on the center.

5.Bg2 Nbd7 6.Bb2 e6 7.0-0 (D)



Position after 7.0-0

Black is well on the way to achieving a model development and need not fear the coming struggle for the center.

7…h6

In order to create a haven for his light-square bishop. He can also continue to develop directly, for example 7…Bd6 8.d4 0-0 9.Nc3 Qe7 10.a3 a5! 11.Nh4 Bg4 with an excellent position for Black.

8.d3 Be7 9.Nbd2 0-0

With Black's queen knight ready to go to c5, he need not be afraid of White's e2-e4, for example 10.Qc2 Bh7 11.e4 dxe4 12.dxe4 Nc5 with a good game for Black.

10.Rc1 a5 11.a3 Re8 12.Rc2 Bd6 13.Qa1 Qe7

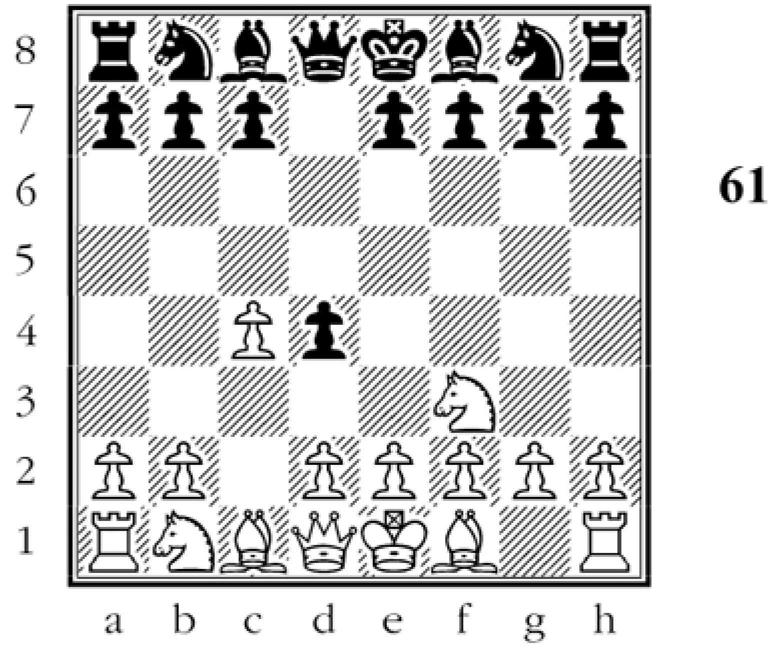
Note how Black bears down on the center from the wings. Black's game is playable.

(b) 2…d4 Variation

Réti Opening

White – Black

1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 d4 (D)



Position after 2…d4

According to “hypermodern” theory, Black has compromised his position by advancing the d-pawn. In actual practice, the pawn has a cramping effect on White’s game.

3.e3 Nc6! 4.exd4 Nxd4 5.Nxd4 Qxd4 6.Nc3 Bg4!

Black has seized the initiative.

7.Qa4+ Bd7! 8.Qb3 Qe5+! 9.Be2 Bc6 10.0-0 0-0-0

Black retains the initiative and has lasting pressure on White’s backward d-pawn.

(c) King’s Indian Reversed

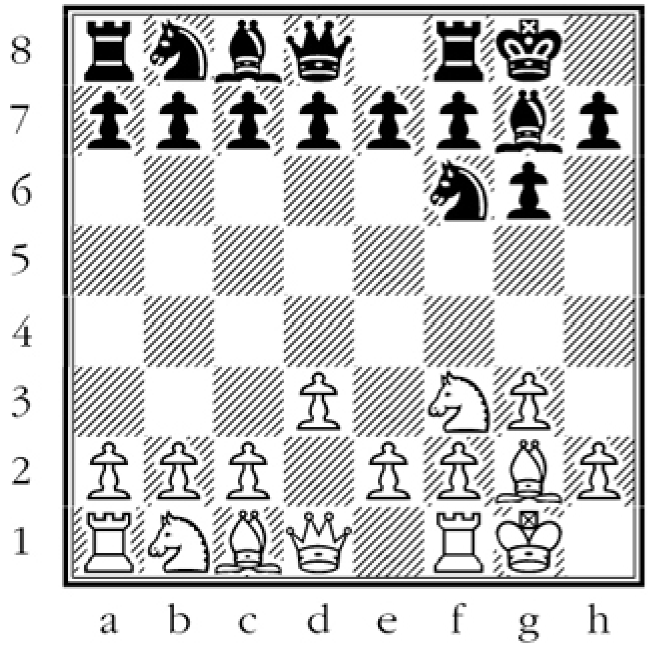
King’s Indian Reversed

White – Black

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6

White is playing the King’s Indian Defense with a move in hand. If instead of the text Black plays 2…d5, a likely continuation is 3.Bg2 e6 4.0-0 Be7 5.d3 0-0 6.Nbd2 c5 7.e4 with an excellent game for White.

3.Bg2 Bg7 4.0-0 0-0 5.d3 (D)



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Position after 5.d3

Black can still choose between an eventual …d6 or …d5.

5…d5

Also after 5…c5 6.e4 Nc6 7.Nbd2 d6 8.a4 followed by Nc4 White has an excellent game.

6.Nbd2 c5 7.e4 Nc6 8.Re1 e5 9.exd5 Nxd5

Now White continues 10.Nc4 with a good game.

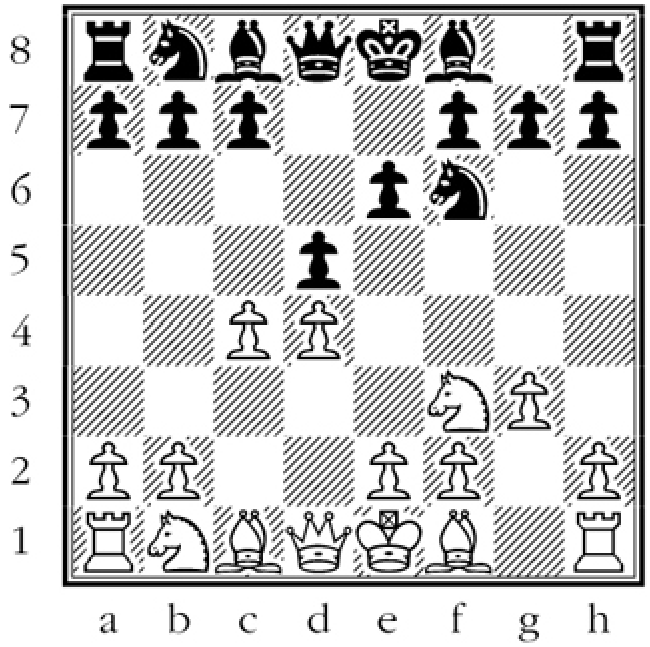
Catalan System

This opening features the fianchetto of White’s light-square bishop (as in the Reti Opening) and d2-d4 (as in the Queen’s Gambit). It abounds in positional finesses that can prove fatal for Black if he plays carelessly.

Catalan System

White – Black

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.g3 (D)



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Position after 4.g3

This position can be reached by many transpositions, as for example 1.Nf3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.g3 Nf6 4.d4 etc.

4…dxc4

More interesting – and more complicated – is the alternative 4…Be7 5.Bg2 0-0 6.0-0 c5 7.cxd5 Nxd5! (not 7…exd5 leading into the inferior Tarrasch line – page 261) 8.e4 Nb6 9.Nc3 cxd4 10.Nxd4 Nc6 11.Nxc6 bxc6 12.Qe2 e5. In this position White undoubtedly has possibilities of pressure against Black’s weak c-pawn. On the other hand, Black’s excellent development gives him ample resources.

5.Qa4+ Bd7!

Simpler than 5…Nbd7 6.Qxc4 a6 7.Bg2 b5 8.Qc6 Rb8 9.0-0 Bb7 10.Qc2 c5 11.a4 Qb6 with a difficult position that gives both sides fighting chances.

6.Qxc4 Bc6 7.Bg2 Bd5

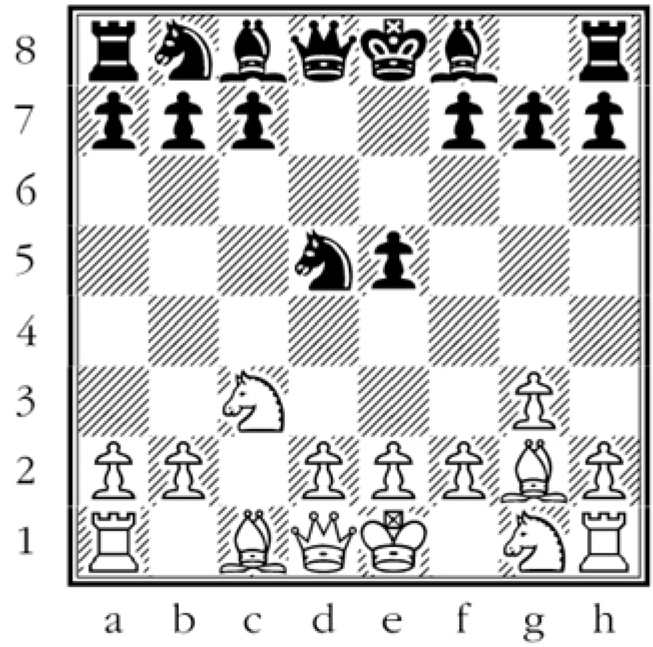
Black has countered White’s fianchetto without weakening his position in any way. After 8.Qc2 Nc6 9.Qd1 Bb4+ – or 8.Qd3 c5 9.Nc3 Bc6 10.0-0 Nbd7 11.Rd1 Qb6 the position is even.

English Opening

After 1.c4 Black has many replies, such as 1…Nf6 or 1…e6, which are likely to transpose into other openings. Generally speaking, it is only 1…e5 which gives this opening independent status. In the ensuing play it is White’s object to utilize 1.c4 to control the d5-square. The logical way to do this is to fianchetto the light-square bishop, which is consequently one of the most popular positional motifs of this opening. Black must fight energetically for control of the center in order to maintain equality.

(a) King Fianchetto Variation with …d5

English Opening
White – Black
1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.g3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.Bg2 (D)



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Position after 5.Bg2

Note how powerfully White’s fianchettoed bishop bears down on the long diagonal, particularly on the vital center square d5. Black must come to a decision about the future of his attacked knight.

Black can maintain the knight at his centralized post with 5…Be6, but after 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.0-0 Be7 White forces Black to give way with the dynamic 8.d4!. Then, after 8…exd4 9.Nxd4 Nxc3 10.bxc3 Nxd4 11.cxd4 c6 12.Rb1! White still maintains his pressure on Black's game.

5…Nb6 6.d3 Be7 7.Nh3!

White's 7.Nh3 is a notable exception to the rule that it is poor play to develop this knight to the side of the board. On h3 this knight allows the bishop to exert full sway on the long diagonal, and also permits the early line-clearing f2-f4! (both objectives would be blocked by the orthodox Nf3).

7…0-0 8.0-0 Nc6 9.f4! Rb8 10.fxe5 Nxe5 11.Nf4!

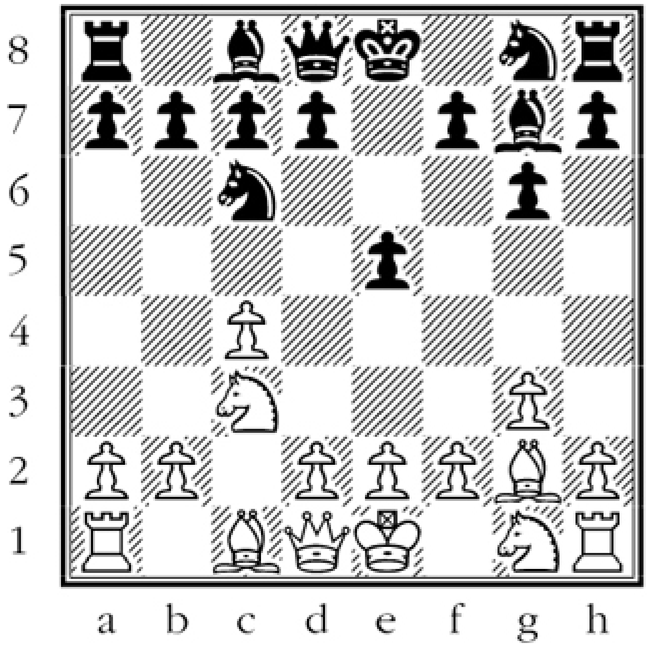
White's position is distinctly superior. His fianchettoed bishop and both knights control the crucial center square d5; he has an open f-file; and his center pawns have great potential power in case of an eventual advance.

(b) King Fianchetto Variation with …d6

English Opening

White – Black

1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 (D)



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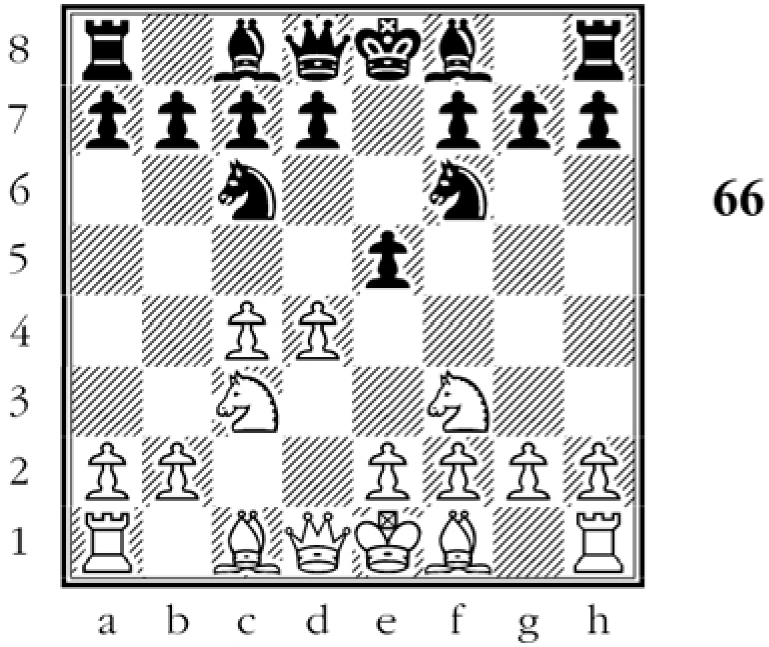
Position after 4…Bg7

White has the best of both worlds: he not only controls the important d5-square, but he can also control his own d4-square with e2-e3 and utilize this pawn move to build a pawn center.

5.e3! d6 6.Nge2 Nge7 7.d4 exd4 8.Nxd4 Nxd4 9.exd4 0-0 10.0-0 Nf5

After 11.d5 Re8 12.Ne4! h6 13.Qd3! White has a very superior position, as he can increase his positional advantage with Rb1 and Bd2 followed by Bc3!.

(c) Four Knights' Variation
English Opening
White – Black
1.c4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.d4 (D)



Position after 4.d4

White immediately opens up the position on the theory that he can seize the initiative, for example 4…e4 5.Nd2 Nxd4 6.Ndxe4 Ne6 7.g3 with a promising position for White.

4…exd4 5.Nxd4 Bb4 6.Bg5 h6 7.Bh4 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 Ne5 9.f4!

Much more vigorous than the routine 9.e3 Ng6 10.Bg3 Ne4 with a good game for Black.

9…Ng6

Not 9…Nxc4? 10.e4! Ne3 11.Qe2 Nxf1 12.e5! 0-0 13.Nf5! with a winning game.

10.Bxf6 Qxf6 11.g3! 0-0 12.e4 d6 13.Bg2 c6

After 14.0-0 Re8 15.Rb1 White has considerably more mobility, while Black has vague possibilities of menacing White's weak c-pawns.

Bird's Opening

A rare opening, as 1.f4 contributes nothing to White's development. The idea of controlling the e5-square often leads to a kind of Dutch Defense (page 282) with colors reversed. Black has a number of ways to obtain an excellent game.

Bird's Opening
White – Black

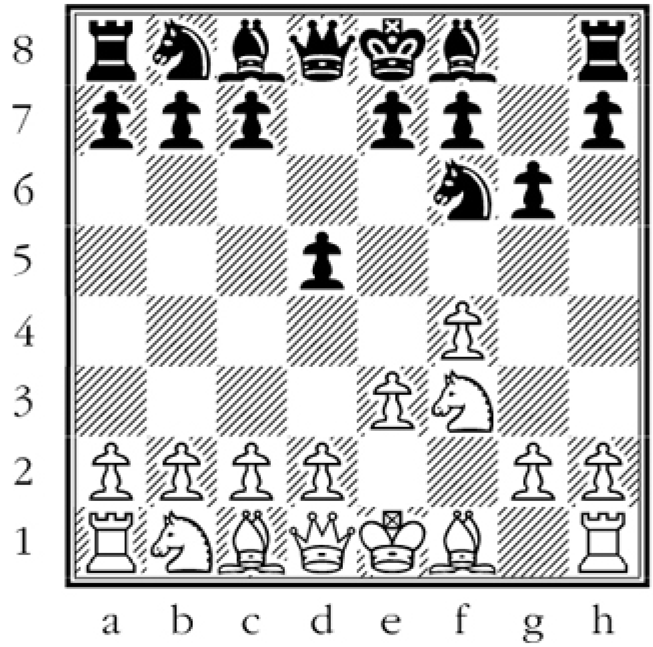
1.f4 Nf6

From's Gambit (1…e5) is not quite satisfactory, for example 2.fxe5 d6 3.exd6 Bxd6 4.Nf3 g5 5.d4 g4 6.Ng5! f5 7.e4! h6 8.e5 Be7 9.Nh3 gxh3 10.Qh5+ Kf8 11.Bc4 Qe8 12.Qxh3 with a decisive attack in return for the sacrificed piece.

2.e3 g6 3.Nf3

Nor is the immediate queen fianchetto very promising, for example 3.b3 Bg7 4.Bb2 d6 5.Qc1 0-0 6.Nf3 Nc6 7.Be2 Bg4 8.0-0 e5! and Black has the better game.

3…d5 (D)



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Position after 3…d5

White can now resort to a stonewall formation, but after 4.d4 Bg7 5.Bd3 0-0 6.Nbd2 c5 7.c3 b6 8.Qe2 Bb7 Black has a fine game.

4.Be2 Bg7 5.0-0 c5 6.d3 Nc6 7.Qe1 0-0 8.Qh4 Qc7 9.Nbd2 e5

Black has an excellent game in this position (a Dutch Defense with colors reversed).

Editorial Notes

Page 44: …9…Qxf2+ 10.Kxf2 Ne4+ with an easy game. [For White!]

Page 44: …Black hadn't expected to grab a pawn, but he captures the d-pawn to "save face." [Actually because any other move loses a piece at least.]

Page 63: Unfortunately, if 1…Nd7 2.Qg5! leaves Black without a good move… [This is only better for White after 2…Kc7, while 2.Qg2 wins.]

Page 70: Thus if 1…Bxf7?? 2.Nd6+ winning Black's queen because Black's bishop is pinned. [Nevertheless, Black is still winning.]

Page 70: Or if 1…Kxf7 2.Bxe6+ Qxe6 3.Ng5+ Bxg5 4.Rxe6 Kxe6 5.Qg4+ winning either Black's bishop on g5 or his knight on d7. The resulting position would be lost for Black because of the exposed position of his king. [Black is winning.]

Page 70: Bewildered by the complications, Black plays: **1…Ngf6?? 2.Nfd6+ Kf8 3.Nxf5** and White wins easily. [Black is much better but no longer winning.]

Page 71: With ordinary care, Black's material advantage will yield him an easy win. [After 1…Qd6 followed by …Re6 White is better. After 1…Bf4 Black is better, but not winning.]

Page 111: As we'll see in a moment, Black has more sparkling attacking ideas in mind. If 17.bxa3 Qxa3+ 18.Kb1 Nb4 wins. [18…Ne5! wins; 18…Nb4 19.Qxd7+ Kf8 20.Qd6+ draws.]

Page 132: – if 24.Bxf7 Nxf7! 25.Nxc6 Bxe1 26.Ne7! Bd2 27.Qh5+ Nh6 28.Ng6+ Kg8 29.Nxf8 Kxf8 and Black's material advantage of three minor pieces against the queen should win the game for him. [White has a big advantage after 30.Qxg5.]

Page 199: In the position of Diagram 26 White threatens 1.Ne6!. If then 1…fxe6 2.Qh7+ and 3.Qxg7#. Or if 1…Bxb2+ 2.Kxb2 fxe6 3.Qh8+ “Kf7 4.Rh7# [A stronger threat is 1.Qh7+ Kf8 2.Ne6+ fxe6 3.Qxg7#.]

Page 199: The best way for Black to guard against the threat seems to be 1…Nc8. If then 2.Ne6? [Better is 2.Qh7+ Kf8 3.Qxg7+.] 2…Bxb2+ 3.Kxb2 Qf6+ and Black prevents the mate and wins a piece as well.

Page 208: At this point the game was abandoned as a draw, for both players realized that discretion is the better part of valor in this position. [29.Ne6 wins for White.]

Page 234: If now 9.exd5 Nf6 [9…Qxd5 is all right, but 9…Nf6 loses to 10.Qa4+ c6 11.Bd2] 10.Qa4+ c6 and Black’s game is very comfortable.

Page 276: 19.Bf4 Ba5! and the threat of …Bc7 enables Black to regain his pawn with a superior position, thanks to his two bishops. [19…Ba5? loses to 20.Kc2, but 19…Nd7 offers resistance.]